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GEORGE R. SIMS

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AMONG MY  
AUTOGRAPHS



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# A M O N G M Y A U T O G R A P H S

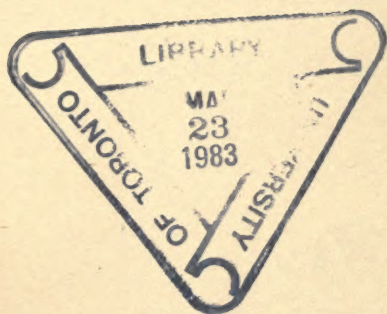
BY  
GEORGE R. SIMS



WITH SEVENTY FACSIMILES

LONDON  
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1904



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# AMONG MY AUTOGRAPHS

## I

There are no half-hours in my library so pleasant as those in which I go to the bookshelves that hold my little collection of first or early editions, the value of most of them enhanced for me by the autograph of the author, which I have been able to insert in the prized volume.

To embellish a good book with the letter of the man who gave it to the world has been a delight of mine from my youth upwards. The hand that wrote the lines I read has been cold in the grave this many a year, but the words on the faded note-paper are still as the master penned them, and often they give a truer index to the man than all he wrote for print and re-read and corrected as he passed it for press. Even where no clue to character is contained in the author's letter, there are little everyday details and incidents which reveal in a few lines more than all the pages of the professional biographer.

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\*

I take from my bookshelf a volume bound in faded brown cloth. On the title-page I read "The Poems of William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate, etc. etc." It is the edition published by Edward Moxon in 1847, and it was once a dearly valued copy, for in it, in a neat handwriting, is this dedication :

*To Jemima Katharine Quillinan  
from her Father.  
Rydal. October 18. 1849.*

In 1847, the year in which this volume was published, Wordsworth suffered a terrible domestic calamity in the death of his only daughter, Dora, Mrs. Quillinan. Edward Quillinan, her husband, was left a widower with two daughters, and Dora Wordsworth was his second wife. It was two years after her step-mother's death that Mr. Quillinan presented the volume of Wordsworth which is now mine to his daughter Jemima. A year later Wordsworth himself had passed away, and was buried by the side of Mrs. Quillinan in the beautiful churchyard of Grasmere.

In this volume I have inserted a letter written by Wordsworth himself to "Miss Constable, 16 Cunningham Place, St. John's Wood, London." Miss Constable

was the daughter of John Constable, and the poet's letter glows with appreciation of the great artist's work.

Here is the letter, and a portion of it reproduced in facsimile :

Mr. Wordsworth presents his compliments to the Misses Constable, and thanks them for the acceptable present of the Memoirs of their Father's life, which he

*Mr Wordsworth presents his  
Compliments to the Misses  
Constable and thanks them  
for the acceptable present  
of the Memoirs of their  
Father's life which he  
has just received*

has just received. He lost no time in perusing the book, with which on many accounts he has been much interested. Mr. Wordsworth had the pleasure of making Mr. Constable's acquaintance when he visited this country long ago ; and through their common friend, Sir George Beaumont, used often to hear of him, though he had not the good fortune to fall in with him, till the latter part of his life, when they met with mutual pleasure. The engravings with which the memoirs are illustrated are very striking, and eminently characteristic of the painter's mind. Mr. W. was not



unacquainted with these works, and Mr. Constable had gratified him with a copy of his "English Landscape," a work most honourable to his genius. Pity that he did not prolong his stay in this beautiful country, so that we might have had its features reflected by his pencil.

Rydal Mount, June 6, 1844.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Italy : A Poem by Samuel Rogers," was published in its completed form in 1830, and I have the first edition. Samuel Rogers was a wealthy man, a man of taste and letters, and a liberal patron of the arts. The letter of his which I have placed in "Italy" came into my possession many years ago. It is written to Miss Flaxman :

My dear Miss Flaxman,—My house shall always open its doors to you and your friends, and I need not say how much I feel flattered by your application.

May I venture to name Monday next ? On that day, and at two o'clock or thereabouts (unless I hear from you to the contrary), your ladies will perhaps have the goodness to come.—Yours very sincerely,

Samuel Rogers.

St. James's Place, Thursday, June 28, 1832.

The breakfast-parties at St. James's Place were famous. Round the poet's table gathered the wits of the day. Rogers himself was the sayer of many smart

things. Lord Dudley (Ward) had been rather unkind in his criticisms of the poet, and Rogers retaliated with an epigram which has remained famous to this day :

Ward has no heart they say—but I deny it.

Ward *has* a heart, and gets his speeches by it.

Sydney Smith used to say that if Rogers was writing a few verses the street was strewn with straw, the

*Yours very sincerely*

*Saml Rogers*

*A James's Place.*

*Thursday. June 28.*

*1832.*

knocker was tied up, and the answer to the tender inquiries of anxious friends was that Mr. Rogers was as well as could be expected.

Samuel Rogers, when over ninety, found his greatest delight in sitting at the window and watching the changing colours of the evening sky. He died of slow decay, unaccompanied by suffering, at St. James's Place, in 1855.

\* \* \* \* \*

My edition of "The Poetical Works of Thomas

Campbell" was issued by Moxon in 1837. The letter I have inserted is addressed to Robert Hannay, and is dated the 8th of September 1832. The statement contained in the letter with regard to "The Mariners of England," a national lyric of the sea which will endure while the English language lasts, is interesting :

Sir,—I thank you for your good opinion of "The Mariners of England," but they were composed, not at the request of a friend, but at the impulse of Callcott's

*I remain*  
*Sir*  
*Your very obedt servt*  
*Thos Campbell*

glorious tune, "Ye Gentlemen of England." I was flattered to hear that when Dr. Callcott first saw my words he instantly adopted them to accompany his air, and he left behind him the words and music copied out with his own hand.—I remain, sir, your very obedt. servant.

Thos. Campbell.

As "The Mariners" was originally written two lines ran as follows—



Where Blake, the boast of freedom, fell  
Your manly hearts shall glow.

Nelson was then alive. When Nelson was killed the first line of the above was changed to—

Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell.

Campbell saw the battle of Ratisbon, and was by the scene inspired to write his realistic "Battle of Hohenlinden," which was fought some months after he had left Bavaria. The poet, whose war songs and lyrics sound the noblest note of patriotism, died in 1844, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, some of the most eminent noblemen and statesmen of the day attending the ceremony, which partook of a national character.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Last Days of Pompeii" was originally published in three volumes by Bentley, in 1834, in plain, commonplace covers which would certainly not attract on the bookstalls to-day. The letter I have inserted in the first volume is addressed by the author to Mr. L. C. Gent, of Manchester :

Sir,—You are welcome to insert the poem you mention, "Last Days of Elizabeth," in your collection.

I am much flattered by your obliging reference to my poems.—Yours,

E. B. Lytton.

Knebworth, Stevenage, Sept. 1861.

Bulwer Lytton was born in Baker Street, and I never pass the house, No. 31, without wondering why no

Sir

You are welcome to  
insert the poem you  
inventer last Days of Elizabeth  
in your collection  
I am much obliged by  
your every experience  
to my poems

Yr  
J. W. Lytton

J. W. Lytton  
1861  
Knebworth  
Stevens

tablet recording the fact has been fixed up. The only memento of it is the name of "Lytton House," which is painted up over the business premises which constitute the ground-floor. Lytton was an amazingly industrious

man ; he was always " writing something " or " doing something." He earned fame as a poet and a politician, as a novelist and a satirist, as a dramatist and as a dandy. In this connection he was somewhat severely handled by Tennyson. In " The New Timon," published in 1845, Lytton referred to a certain " school miss Alfred," and

The jingling medley of purloined conceits,  
Out-babying Wordsworth and out-glittering Keats.

Immediately afterwards some scathing lines about Lytton appeared in " Punch," and it has always been understood that " Miss Alfred " wrote them. Here are two verses :

Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys  
With dandy pathos when you wrote ;  
O Lion, you that made a noise  
And shook a mane " en papillote."

\* \* \* \* \*

What profits now to understand  
The merits of a spotless shirt,  
A dapper boot, a little hand,  
If half the little soul is dirt !

Bulwer Lytton wrote almost to the last hour of his



life. He had just completed a novel, "Kenelm Chillingly," when he was seized with a great agony, which proved fatal in three days. He died in 1873, leaving behind him an unfinished romance which was completed by his son in 1876.

## II

One of the literary heroes of my youth was Charles Reade. As a novelist he appealed to me strongly, but it was as a dramatist that I knew him best. He was always a fierce fighter, and his sturdy independence in the theatrical world led to many a Homeric struggle. He produced "Gold" in 1850, and out of his prison studies grew the famous "It's Never Too Late to Mend," a drama produced at the Princess's Theatre in 1865, in which was the grim scene which caused Frederick Guest Tomlins, the dramatic critic of the "Morning Advertiser," to rise in his stall on the first night and make a public protest against what he called "its brutal realism"—a realism which was milk and water compared with the scenes to which we are frequently introduced in the melodrama of to-day.

I remember Reade's fierce denunciation of the unfortunate scenic artist who had painted him a cornfield for "Dora," of which he disapproved; his vigorous attack on the critics who objected to "The Wandering

Heir"; and the rage with which he denounced Leopold Lewis and Alfred Thompson for their assertion, in that wonderful production "The Mask," that Reade and Boucicault had taken the plot of "Foul Play" from "Le Portefeuille Rouge."

I did not know Charles Reade personally until he came to the Adelphi years afterwards as the collaborator of Henry Pettitt in a play called "Love or Money." It was not a great success, and after the curtain was down I met Reade behind the scenes and was introduced to him. He had an enormous bouquet in his hand, and was looking about for the leading lady in order to present it to her. But something happened, and he gave the bouquet to Pettitt to hold, and Pettitt gave it to me to take care of while he went to find some one else. Presently Reade came back with Pettitt, and we talked together about the coal-mine scene in the play, and certain alterations which Reade thought would benefit it. I do not think Pettitt quite agreed with Reade, and at any rate they walked off the stage together arguing, and left me with the bouquet.

By this time the leading lady had gone home. I went to the front of the house. Reade had gone. I offered the bouquet to Pettitt. He said he was going to the club and could not take it, so I had better keep it. I took it home to my domestic circle, and when it faded I took one flower and pressed it



between the leaves of a book as a souvenir of Charles Reade.

That book was the first edition of "Peg Woffington," published by Bentley in 1853. In it I have since inserted a letter of Reade's, and also a slip of paper, here reproduced :

Opera Comique.

Feb. 5.

Two to upper boxes.

By consent of Mr. Hingston.

Charles Reade

(Author).

*Opera Comique*  
*Feb 5*  
*Two 1. upper Boxes*  
*By consent of Mr Hingston*  
*Charles Reade*  
*(Author)*

It was the custom in those days for dramatic authors to give passes to theatres in which they were not interested. The Mr. Hingston here mentioned was E. P. Hingston, who was the agent at one time of

Artemus Ward, the genial showman, who lectured in London in 1867. Hingston was manager of the Opera Comique in 1872. Ward, in 1868, lay ill in a street off the Strand, and a literary friend of mine went one night to see him. The genial showman was in a rapid consumption, a disease to which he soon afterwards succumbed at Southampton. But sitting about in his bedroom the Bohemian visitors were smoking their pipes. The scene I witnessed was a strange one, and it is vividly recalled to my mind as I look at the words "Opera Comique," and "By consent of Mr. Hingston."

"Peg Woffington" was founded on "Masks and Faces," the play which Reade had written with Tom Taylor. The book is dedicated "To T. Taylor, Esq., my friend and coadjutor in the comedy of 'Masks and Faces,' and to the memory of Margaret Woffington, falsely 'summed up' until to-day."

\* \* \* \* \*

The next volume I take down from my bookshelf is in marked contrast to the realism of Reade. "Ballads and Sonnets by Dante Gabriel Rossetti" is dedicated to Theodore Watts, "the friend whom my verse has won for me." Rossetti, painter and poet, impatient of the technicalities of Academy training, applied to Ford Madox-Brown for lessons. Madox-Brown set him to paint pickle-jars. But at the house of the master he

met Holman Hunt, Woolner, and Millais, and thus

Wednesday

My dear Mr. Hunt

Thanks for the photo.  
Which is very successful.  
I am glad you have  
remained thus long  
in your present  
healthy neighbourhood  
& hope things are  
looking somewhat  
brighter.

I remember I men-  
tioned long many  
months back to  
me that you had  
spoken of a very  
promising model

who was willing to sit.  
Do you still know of  
her whereabouts?

Yours truly

D. G. Rossetti

originated the Pre-Raphaelite school, of which Rossetti

is so striking an example. At present he is perhaps best known to the general public by his "Blessed Damsel." His poetry, like his painting, was Pre-Raphaelite in subject and method of treatment. In the first edition of the "Ballads and Sonnets" I have a letter by him to a friend who had told him of a female model :

My dear Knewstub,—Thanks for the photo, which is very successful. I am glad you have remained thus long in your present healthy neighbourhood, and hope things are looking somewhat brighter.

I remember F—— mentioned many months back to me that you had spoken of a very promising model who was willing to sit. Do you still know of her whereabouts?—Yours truly,

D. G. Rossetti.

Mr. W. J. Knewstub, to whom this letter is addressed, in 1862 joined Rossetti at Cheyne Walk as something between a pupil and artistic assistant. Mr. William Michael Rossetti, in his interesting "Rossetti Papers," recently published, says of him, "As quasi-pupil he paid a sum down, but as quasi-assistant he did not receive any salary." Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who was marvellously happy in his "nonsense" verse, wrote of his pupil-assistant :



There is a young artist named Knewstub  
Who for personal cleaning will use tub,  
    But in matters of paint  
    Not the holiest saint  
Was ever so dirty as Knewstub.

All the Rossettis, children of that Gabriel Rossetti who fled from Naples in the days of Bourbon rule, and, settling in England, became Professor of Italian at King's College, made themselves names in literature ; but Dante and his sister Christina Georgina were the more famous. It was Rossetti who was fiercely attacked by Robert Buchanan in his article " The Fleshly School of Poetry," to which Swinburne replied in " Under the Microscope " with a wrath and bitterness which have never been equalled in a literary quarrel. Buchanan in after life regretted his attack on Rossetti, and made heartfelt amends in his later years. He told me once that it was the incident of his literary career which he most deeply deplored.

Rossetti married, in 1860, the lady who had been his model for " Beatrice." She was consumptive, and died in 1862. The poet buried his MS. in her coffin, but was persuaded to disinter it in 1869. He died at Birchington-on-Sea in 1882. Among those who were with him in his last hours were Mr. Hall Caine and Mr. Watts-Dunton, the friend to whom his " Ballads and Sonnets " are dedicated.

At the present moment a remarkable work, "A Girl Among the Anarchists," has once more brought the name famous in the world of art and letters prominently before the public. The authoress is a daughter of William Michael Rossetti, a brother of Dante Gabriel, himself one of the Pre-Raphaelites, and a delightful "littérateur."

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Tower of London," the novel of Harrison Ainsworth which Cruikshank illustrated with some of his best work, was long in my possession in the original monthly parts in which it was issued. Some years ago I had the parts bound, preserving the covers in the volume, and inserting letters of Ainsworth's and Cruikshank's. With Cruikshank I propose to deal in connection with "Oliver Twist" and the autograph letters I possess of Charles Dickens. Here I will only reproduce a portion of Harrison Ainsworth's letter :

5 Arundel Terrace,  
Kemp Town, Brighton,  
June 10, 1861.

My dear Sir,—I am quite shocked to think how long I have allowed your last very obliging note to remain unanswered. But I have been exceedingly busy of late, and have put off from day to day a large accumulation of correspondence, until its bulk has quite terrified me. I don't think I shall resume my political

articles in "Bentley" just at present, but I am obliged by your offer of aid in this respect, and on some future occasion I shall be delighted to avail myself of it.

Towards the end of the month I shall be in town, and

*I shall be in Town  
and I may then have  
an opportunity of meeting  
you, and talking matters over.*

*Believe me  
Very truly yours*

*W. Harrison Ainsworth*

I may then have an opportunity of meeting you and talking matters over.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

W. Harrison Ainsworth.

Ainsworth took a public, weary of the stupidities of the fashionable novel, by storm with his "Rookwood," and his account of Dick Turpin's ride to York was considered then, as it is now, a wonderful piece of descriptive writing. "Jack Sheppard," also marvellously

illustrated by Cruikshank, was received by the critics with knitted brows. It undoubtedly glorified a mean and vulgar thief. It was popular on the stage for many years, but several times it was suggested that the Lord Chamberlain ought to prohibit a performance which could not fail to have a demoralising effect on youth. Ainsworth was a prolific—almost a terrific—writer. In 1881, when he was seventy-seven years of age, a banquet was given him in Manchester, his native town, by the Mayor. In a speech the Mayor said that there were 250 volumes of Mr. Ainsworth's writings in the Manchester Public Library. Ainsworth died the following year. The public congratulation by his native town may be considered the close of his long and prosperous career.



### III

It was all on a wild March morning, in 1890, that I saw a lady, panting and distressed, but still running along, close to my house in Regent's Park. She managed to gasp out, "Stop, thief!" and then she had to stand still to recover her breath. I looked about, but saw no thief. He had long since made his escape. Then I went across the road to the lady, and inquired if I could be of any assistance.

The lady was Florence Marryat, daughter of the great nautical novelist who had been the delight of my youth. There was a time when I knew "Japhet in Search of a Father" almost by heart, and could have told you what every chapter in "Snarleyow, the Dog Fiend," was about. Many a night had "The Phantom Ship" haunted my dreams in my school days, and "Masterman Ready" had seemed to me a very much more interesting work than anything the Latin authors that were being constantly drummed into my head had ever written.

Florence Marryat told me her story. A man had stolen her purse, and she had endeavoured to pursue him. I asked her to come into my house and rest, and she sat for a little time in my study. Looking at my bookcases, she noticed that I had several first editions of her father's works. I had only one little letter of the Captain's, and that was not of very great interest. "If you like," said Miss Marryat, "I will send you one of my father's letters to put in a book, and also some pages of his manuscript."

The charming authoress kept her word, and to-day, in my first edition of "The Pirate and the Three Cutters," I have not only a page of the Captain's neat manuscript, but the following letter :—

Friday "good."

My dear Fan,—I have done your business and hold a bill at 3 months for £150. . . .

I have signed the receipt in your husband's name, for it appears that all a wife does or produces out of her brain is the property of her husband, and that she has no claim to it. All she can do is to put her head in Chancery—*i.e.*, do nothing.

Now send me all instructions and I shall obey. As for your compunctions to receive the £150 (which, by-the-bye, I perceive all very much reduced in the post-script) I can only say that if you had had so much to do with Booksellers as I have, you would be aware of the propriety to take all you can get without "remorse."

I have just let the part of Langham 400 acres to a good responsible man for 12 years. He intends being a Decoy Man to work the Lake, and he not only gives me a high rent for the land, but £90 a year for the right of fishing and taking ducks, etc. The other part I can let with ease, as it is just the farm people like, and I have raised my rent from £540 a year to £900 and more as near as I can estimate. Not bad in such times as these.

God bless you, old girl.—Yours ever truly,

F. Marryat.

*Love bless you old girl*

*Yours ever truly*

*F. Marryat*

"The Pirate and the Three Cutters" was published by Longmans in 1836, and is illustrated with engravings from drawings by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A. Marryat, the most popular sea-novelist we have ever had, saw plenty of active service before he settled down to fiction and farming. But he did better with the former than the latter. He made a fortune by his novels, and his receipts from farming one year were £154 2s. 9d., and his expenses £1657 0s. 6d.

The first part of the letter I have given refers to

fiction, for it refers to publishers. The latter portion is interesting because of the mention of "decoy." The Captain had at one time a hobby. He flooded some hundreds of acres of his best grazing ground, got his

LONDON Jan. 11. 18 90

Dear Mr. Sims.

I Send you with much  
 pleasure an autograph  
 letter of my father's -  
 (I have only 3 - all of the  
 same size) & a paper  
 of his MS of the "Prachen"  
 also the 1/2. You kindly  
 write me - and a  
 thousand thanks for  
 the kindness with which  
 you received me today.

Yr very truly  
Frederic Marryat.

decoy into full working order, so as to send some thousands of birds up to the London market; "and then he drained it again." Captain Marryat died at Langham, in Norfolk, the place mentioned in the above letter, August 9, 1848.



Florence Marryat was herself a distinguished novelist. Her early works were delightful. Her later ones dealt largely with spiritualism, in which she was a firm believer. Shortly before her death she told her friends that on a given day of a given year she would try to return, to prove that "there is no death." That was the title of one of her later novels. The letter I give below is bound up in a charming specimen of her earlier style, "Her Lord and Master."

Dear Mr. Sims,—I send you with much pleasure an autograph letter of my father's (I have only three, all of the same size) and a page of his MS. of "The Poacher," also the 1s. you kindly lent me—and a thousand thanks for the kindness with which you received me to-day.—Yours very truly,

Florence Marryat.

The shilling referred to was the result of the thief having left the lady without the wherewithal to pay her fare back to West Kensington.

\* \* \* \* \*

A humourist of a different character from Marryat was Douglas Jerrold, but I take them together, for Jerrold's "Black-Eyed Susan" is the most popular play that was ever written around nautical characters in harbour. And Douglas Jerrold was in his earlier years nautical too. His father was an actor, and the

lessee of Sheerness Theatre. Before he was ten years old Douglas Jerrold wore his Majesty King George's uniform as a volunteer on board the good ship "Namur." He left the sea and worked as a printer. During these years his greatest friend was Laman Blanchard, the author. I have the first edition of Jerrold's "Punch's Letters to His Son," published by Orr and Co., of Paternoster Row, in 1843. It is the copy presented by Douglas Jerrold himself to the son of Laman Blanchard.

To his young friend Sidney Blanchard, son of his "oldest."

With Douglas Jerrold's best wishes and sincerest regards.

Jan. 1843.

*To his young friend, Sidney Blanchard,  
son of his oldest.*

*With Douglas Jerrold's best wishes and sincerest  
regards. / Jan. 1843*

Jerrold's plays, like all his writings, are filled with witty sayings. The "mots" of Jerrold are part of our literature. He said scores of clever things which are put down to other people. In 1852 Jerrold became editor of "Lloyd's" at a salary of £1000 a year. His drama,

"Black-Eyed Susan," ran for three hundred nights. It is on record that the sum received by the author for this colossal success was £70 ! Douglas Jerrold died in 1857, and was buried in Norwood Cemetery,

I value my little book not only for the handwriting of the brilliant humourist, but because by a happy coincidence a Blanchard and a Jerrold were among my earliest literary friends and "confrères."

Another humourist and playwright may fittingly find a place here with Jerrold. Albert Smith earned fame and wealth by his novels—"Christopher Tadpole," illustrated by Leech, "The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury and his Friend Jack Johnson," and "The Pottleton Legacy"—wrote for the stage, and edited several journals; but his fame rests largely on his "Ascent of Mont Blanc," and the marvellous entertainment—for it was a lecture with scenery—which he gave in connection with his mountaineering accomplishment. The entertainment was given over a thousand times, and always to packed houses. I have the first edition of "The Story of Mont Blanc," published by David Bogue in 1853, as clean, as fresh, as perfect as the day it was issued from the press.

In this I have inserted a little autograph letter of Albert Smith's which is on a dramatic subject, but not quite so dramatic as his ascent of the monarch of mountains, for it was a burlesque of "Valentine and

Orson," which was running at the Adelphi. Here is the letter :

12 Percy Street, Wednesday.

Dear Webster,—Thanks for the cheque. All right.  
Our letters crossed on the way.—Yours always,

Albert Smith.

*12 Percy St  
Wednesday*

*Dear Webster  
Thanks for  
the cheque all right.*

*Our letters crossed on  
the way*

*Yours always  
Albert Smith.*

This letter, which came to me folded in half, is endorsed on the back by Benjamin Webster :

Albert Smith.

Payment for 25 nights of  
"Valentine and Orson."

Albert Smith was born in 1816, and died in 1860, He studied medicine in Paris, and made considerable use of his experience in "Ledbury." He did an



immense amount of magazine and periodical work, but his lectures and entertainments, which were in the style of Matthews' "At homes," made him more money than all his other work put together.

Albert Smith was a great friend of Dickens, and I had in my possession a "Penang lawyer," a stick which Smith sent to Dickens when he was on his well-known "Trip to China." The stick had a silver band, on which was inscribed "From Albert Smith to Charles Dickens." It was shown in the recent Dickens Exhibition, together with Dickens's own sketch for the desk which he used for his readings, and his written instructions for the making of it. This is among my most cherished possessions.

#### IV

"*Oliver Twist*" was first published in "*Bentley's Miscellany*." It made its first appearance in book form in 1838, in three volumes, as—"Oliver Twist ; or, The Parish Boy's Progress. By Boz." All the world knows that the illustrations, twenty-four in number, were by George Cruikshank. I have the volumes in their original cloth binding, and in the first I have inserted a letter written by Charles Dickens in 1841, and a letter of George Cruikshank's of a much later date.

The assertion was made by Cruikshank, after Dickens's death, that the artist suggested the title and the subject to the author. This assertion John Forster completely disposed of in his "*Life of Dickens*." Cruikshank did suggest a name for the hero. That name was "*Frank Faithful*," or "*Frank Steadfast*." Dickens rejected both, probably with a shudder, and called his hero "*Oliver Twist*." This marvellous combination of humour and pathos, of the comedy and

tragedy of crime, is the work of Dickens which has perhaps most deeply impressed itself upon the public mind. Oliver and Bumble, Fagin and the Artful

*elsewhere: myself*

*By the Shalworth B&L.*

*My dear Thompson.*

Your visitors are going to drink  
with us - and so strange, or indeed  
no body else that I know of - on  
Sunday at five. Will you send  
me the pleasure of, seeing you? Take  
your visitors off, and come.

*Faithfully yours*

*Charles Dickens*  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

*J. J. Thompson myself*

Dodger, Bill Sikes and Nancy—we are as familiar with them to-day as when they first made their appearance before a spellbound world over sixty years ago. "Oliver Twist" has been translated into a dozen

languages. I picked it up in Spanish, as "El Hijo de la Parocha," on a cheap bookstall in Madrid.

The letter I give below was written by Dickens shortly before he went to Edinburgh to be entertained there at a public dinner, with Professor Wilson in the chair :

Devonshire Terrace,  
May the Thirteenth, 1841.

My dear Thompson,—Your sisters are going to dine with us—and no strangers, or indeed anybody else that I know of—on Tuesday at five. Will you give me the pleasure of seeing you? Take your blister off, and come.—Faithfully yours,

Charles Dickens.

S. J. Thompson, Esq.

At the time this letter was sent Dickens was writing the closing chapters of "Barnaby Rudge," the story of the Gordon Riots which gave Dolly Varden to the rosebud garden of English girls, and introduced us to an immortal raven. The raven, by the way, who was made a member of the Dickens household that the author might study it, died before the completion of the book. His last words were "Hulloh, old girl." Dickens assured Maclise that some time previously the bird had uttered incoherent remarks as to the disposal of its property, which consisted chiefly of the fruits of petty larceny.

It was while "Barnaby Rudge" was running that Lord Jeffery dined with Dickens at Devonshire Place, and referred to him in a letter written in May 1841 as giving dinners "rather too sumptuous for a man with a family, and only beginning to be rich." Dickens complained bitterly of the pecuniary reward he received for some of his earlier works. He quarrelled with Bentley over "Oliver Twist." In a letter to Forster he says, "The profits which 'Oliver' has realised to its publisher and is still realising, and the paltry, wretched sums it has brought to me!" Again, "And I have still the slavery and drudgery of another work on the same journeyman terms—the consciousness that my books are enriching everybody connected with them but myself. . . . I am struggling . . . to fill the pockets of others, while for myself and those dear to me I can realise little more than a genteel subsistence."

That he wrote in 1838; by 1841 he had turned the tables on the publishers, and, as Lord Jeffery says, was "beginning to be rich." He realised enormous sums as the years went on. For one short story, "Hunted Down," he received from the "New York Ledger" 1000 guineas. That is held to be a record payment for a story which, when published afterwards in "All the Year Round," only filled a few pages, and was under ten thousand words. I have the story, "not" in "All the Year Round," but in a Christmas number



issued by John Camden Hotten, and called the "Piccadilly Annual." In a letter to Tom Hood, which I have, Charles Dickens, the son, speaks his mind plainly as to the Hotten enterprise.

The letter of George Cruikshank, which I have inserted in the first volume of "Oliver Twist," is of a much later date. For obvious reasons, I have suppressed the title of the engraving referred to, and the name of the engraver :

Dec. 4th, '69,  
263 Hampstead Road, N.W.

My dear Mr. Reid,—The "party" who "undertook" to engrave — was —, and in this instance he behaved very badly—for it was very badly engraved by some of his assistants. He never touched it himself until after I had seen a proof—a "very bad" proof—but a very strong proof that he had behaved very badly. I "touched the proof"—and he then touched the plate—but I "never touched a penny," although a partner in this matter with Mr.—, the publisher, who paid the engraver, and "repaid himself," and sold the plate to — !

I find that the only impression of this plate that I have is the one "framed and glazed," which perhaps you would kindly look at some morning as you are passing. The picture which I painted for the Prince Consort is in Buckingham Palace ; and I should very much like "you" to see the picture, and if you felt disposed to do so I would make an arrangement for that purpose.

In a few days—days should I not see you here—you may expect to see in the "Print Room" of "The British Museum"—Yours truly,

Geo. Cruikshank.

*In a few days—days  
should I not see you  
here—You may expect  
to see in the "Print Room" of  
"The British Museum"*

*Yours truly  
Geo Cruikshank*

The Mr. Reid to whom this was written was the head of the Prints and Drawings Department of the British Museum, and in connection with his friendship with Cruikshank I can tell a curious story. My friend and collaborator, Mr. Arthur Shirley, was in early life in this department also, and he has frequently known Cruikshank come with a drawing to the Museum to ask Reid if it was a genuine Cruikshank or not. Many of Cruikshank's early drawings were placed on the

market when he had become world-famous. The people to whom they were offered would sometimes submit them to Cruikshank to know if they were genuine. It was in these cases that he occasionally sought the assistance of his friend Reid.

Some of his most remarkable caricatures were done for William Hone's political squibs. His most famous work in this connection was, however, "The Banknote," a drawing of a £1-note, the gallows and its victims being cleverly worked into the design. Hone made over £700 by this, and Cruikshank had the gratification of knowing that it brought about the abolition of the penalty of death for banknote forgery.

It was with "Rookwood," in 1836, that his connection with Harrison Ainsworth commenced, and in the same year he began his artistic partnership with Dickens in "Sketches by Boz."

"The Bottle" was his first contribution to the Temperance movement. "The Drunkard's Children," a later drawing, is said to have been the means of converting the artist himself. Ever after that he was a strict teetotaler. I met him in the later years of his life on three occasions at public dinners. His first act in sitting down was to reverse all the wineglasses in front of him as a sign to the wine-waiters to pass him by.

He spent the later years of his life at 263 Hampstead Road, and died there in 1878.

To the day of his death he cherished the belief that he had given Ainsworth the idea for "Jack Sheppard" and Dickens the idea for "Oliver Twist." In both instances he was honestly mistaken. He was a fine

43 Fairholme Road W  
14 July 1896

my dear Sims,

Perhaps it is not a matter of any great importance, but I know you like to be accurate and so write to point out to you that the row between Pott and Shink took place in the kitchen, and not the smoking room, of the *Sincerus* Head at Worcester; and also that it was at the Angel at Bury St. Edmunds that Sam compared himself — to Job Trotter, by the bye, and not to Mr. Pickwick — to a walking brandy bottle.

Sincerely yours

Charles Dickens

old fellow, and was full of vitality to the last. When he was eighty years of age his favourite amusement was to sing a rattling comic song to his guests, and he would wind up by dancing a hornpipe.

It may not be inappropriate here to quote a letter written to me in connection with "The Pickwick Papers" by the great novelist's eldest son, who was my intimate personal friend :

43 Fairholme Road, W.  
14 July 1895.

My dear Sims,—Perhaps it is not a matter of any great importance, but I know you like to be accurate, and so write to point out to you that the row between Pott and Slurk took place in the<sup>1</sup>kitchen, and not the smoking-room, of the Saracen's Head at Towcester ; and also that it was at the Angel at Bury St. Edmunds that Sam compared himself—to Job Trotter, by-the-bye, and not to Mr. Pickwick—to a walking brandy bottle.—Sincerely yours,

Charles Dickens.

"Carados," I notice, says, "'Another gap in our ranks,' said Paul Meritt, when the sage of Chelsea passed away." It was when Victor Hugo, himself a dramatist, passed away, and I heard poor Paul say it.

The letter was called forth by a paragraph I had written in the "Referee" in connection with a day and a night that I spent at Towcester when on a driving tour. One other personal connection with the Dickens family I may perhaps note in passing. When I sat in the dock of the Guildhall Police Court, charged with libelling a gentleman of fistic fame by saying that he



was hired to make a disturbance at certain meetings during the Hackney parliamentary election, Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, another son of the novelist, and now Recorder of Maidstone, defended me, and restored me at the end of the day's proceedings to my family and friends without a stain on my character.

## V

Long years ago, when my old friend Sir John R. Robinson, then editor of the "Daily News," asked me to dine with him at the Reform Club, he introduced me to three men whom I had always been anxious to know and to listen to. One was Andrew Lang, happily still with us, and as scholarly an essayist and charming a poet as ever. The others were Bret Harte and William Black.

The poems of Bret Harte had appealed to me strongly as a youth in the days when I scribbled verse and sent it to the popular periodicals, and regularly had it returned or heard no more about it.

Colonel John Hay and Bret Harte I studied in the limp-covered shilling editions that were issued in the old days by John Camden Hotten. Colonel John Hay inspired me first, and I tried to catch his style in a poem which I wrote when I was about twenty. This poem, called "Jack's Story," after going the round of the London periodicals, eventually found a home in

the "San Francisco News Letter," a vivid and original journal, which had on its staff my afterwards friend and colleague, Ambrose Bierce.

I told Bierce that it was John Hay and Bret Harte who had first started me on the perilous path of "poetry," and I believe Bierce told both of them in America.

At any rate, on my way to Malvern one day, long afterwards, I was at Paddington station, sitting in a compartment of a train that was just about to start, when a gentleman came to the carriage-window and said, "George R. Sims?" "Yes," I said. "Glad to meet you. I am Colonel John Hay." A hurried grip of the hand, and the engine shrieked and whirled me away. That was the only time I met the author of "Little Breeches."

When Bret Harte died I wrote a brief memoir of him in the "Referee," and Sir John Robinson sent me a kindly letter telling me that when Bret Harte came to London and met Sir John he told him he would like to see me. The little dinner at the Reform was arranged that I might be, among others, introduced to the man who wrote those wondrous songs of the sierras.

I have a letter of Bret Harte's, written when he was Consul at Glasgow. I had letters from him myself, for I got to know him very well, as we were at one time close neighbours in Hamilton Terrace, but these letters

have been so carefully put away that I cannot find them. Here is the letter I have inserted in "Works of Bret Harte," the edition published in 1872, to which the Rev. J. M. Bellew, the father of Kyrle Bellew, the actor, wrote the preface, introducing the American writer to the British public. The letter is a humorous reference to something that happened to the author's "proofs."

Consulate of the United States of America,  
Glasgow, January 29, 1882.

Gentlemen,—I enclose revise corrected. I beg to call your attention to error in first line of "April" number, where the parenthesis intended for the printer and proof-reader is quietly and calmly introduced into the "text." Please have it stricken out, as it is a simple absurdity there.

I have enclosed the slip, having underlined the direction to the proof-reader, which I fondly believed he would understand, when I returned the first proofs.  
—Yours, &c.,  
Bret Harte.

Bret Harte was of Dutch descent, and was born in 1837, at Albany, New York. His father, a school-master, died when his son was a boy, and the straitened circumstances of the family sent the lad into a store. He was seventeen when he left for California, taking his mother with him. He tramped to the mines of Sonora, and there became a school-

master. He soon, however, drifted into journalism, and became editor of the "Eureka Journal." Then he

*I have enclosed the slip,  
being underlined the direction to  
the proof reader which I fully  
believed he would understand, when  
I returned the first proofs.*

*Yours to  
Bret Harte*

went to 'Frisco, worked at case, and became editor of the "Golden Era." It was when editing the "Overland Monthly" that he wrote in it "The Luck of Roaring



Camp," and from that moment his fame was secured in both hemispheres.

Bret Harte in appearance was quite unlike what his early tales and poetry suggested him to the public. Bellew said of him, "He looks as if he dated his letters from St. James's Square rather than San Francisco." I saw him for the last time only a little while before he died. He came into Verrey's with a friend, and I had a few minutes with him. But he could scarcely speak, and the incident was a very painful one to me, remembering him as I did in the days of his strength and manly beauty. The throat trouble was then acute, and we who loved him were heartbroken to know that the end could not long be delayed. Bret Harte knew it too, and there was something in the last grip of the hand he ever gave me that said "Farewell."

\* \* \* \* \*

William Black made his first great success with "A Daughter of Heth," published in 1871; but "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," which followed, in 1872, made a wider mark. It is a delightful description of a driving tour from London to Edinburgh, with a little fiction thrown in. This was immensely popular, and was practically used as a guidebook by many cultured Americans travelling the same route. The letter I have inserted in the first edition of "The

"Strange Adventures" was written by Black to my friend and workfellow, and editor of many years, the late Henry Sampson.

Sampson and Black were old newspaper comrades, and both at one time lived in Buckingham Street, Strand, where also at one time Mr. B. L. Farjeon, the novelist, had chambers. I do not know why our publisher omitted to reply to Black's request; it was certainly an accident, as there was nothing in the paper that could suggest a fear of the eminent novelist desiring it in order to find something libellous concerning himself. Sampson always had the highest opinion of Black and his work.

Paston House, Paston Place,  
Brighton, October 15.

Dear Sampson,—Last week I wrote to your business manager asking him to send me a volume of the "Referee," bound or unbound, for any recent year, and honourably offering to pay for the same. As he has not answered my note, I imagine that he suspects me of some dark and sinister motive; whereas I am not. I wouldn't harm a fly; I am merely introducing a sporting character into my next novel, and want to keep myself correctly coached. Would you do me the kindness of enlightening his mind on that point—if one year's numbers of the "Referee" are procurable?

When I last saw Mrs. Chart, in July, she told me you were then in Brighton; and I meant to have called on you; but found myself overwhelmed with the worries

attending our pilgrimage to Scotland. Are you likely to be back in Brighton this winter?—Yours very faithfully,  
William Black.

It is needless to say that a bound volume was placed at Black's service, and Sampson wrote offering in

*When I last saw Mrs. Chant,  
in July, she told me you were then  
in Brighton; & I meant to have  
called on you; but found myself  
overwhelmed with the worries  
attending our pilgrimage to Scotland  
Are you likely to be back in  
Brighton this winter?*

*Yours very faithfully  
William Black.*

addition to give the writer personally any information he might desire.

William Black wanted to be an artist, and he studied in his native city, Glasgow; but he became a painter with the pen instead of the brush, and in 1864 he came to London as a professional journalist. He was on the staff of the "Morning Star," the journal on which Edmund Yates was the entertaining "Flaneur," many

years before he founded and edited the "World." Black was the "Star's" special correspondent during the Prusso-Austrian War of 1866. For four or five years he was assistant editor of the "Daily News"; and so it was quite a "Daily News" dinner that Sir John Robinson gave to Bret Harte.

William Black died on December 10, 1898. I have an excellent portrait of him hanging in my dining-room, because I have John Pettie's picture known as "On the Ground First." The figure is clad in the garb of the days of the old romance, but the features are those of William Black. The great Scotch novelist frequently lent his features to the canvas of the great Scotch Royal Academician.


\* \* \* \* \*

Here let me add another Scotch autograph. Who does not know the homely, pathetic story of "Rab and his Friends"? It is the simple tale of a poor Scotch carrier and his dog. It had, in its day, as great a vogue as the tales of Dickens. All the world wept over poor Rab.

I have the first edition, and it is the copy presented by Dr. John Brown, the author, to the famous and delightful actress Miss Ada Cavendish.

I remember Ada Cavendish when in her youth and beauty she made her first great bid for fame in "Ixion,"

Sir Francis Burnand's burlesque, at the Royalty. I remember her Mercy Merrick in "The New Magdalen." "Pass the English lady" rings in my ears to this day. I remember her Miss Gwilt in the weird "Armada" story. I remember her marriage with my friend Frank

*Miss Ada Savendish*  
*With Mr. Arthur's*  
*Kind regards*  
*18<sup>th</sup> Nov.*  
*1873*  


Marshall, who gave us not only plays, but the "Irving Shakespeare"; and I remember the days when the once brilliant favourite of the footlights was stricken down by a painful and mortal illness.

It was then that she gave "Rab and his Friends" to a friend of mine, who, knowing my love for the story, my friendship for Frank Marshall, and my admiration of his wife, gave the sad souvenir to me.



## VI

Robert Buchanan was my friend and close companion for many years. I have most of his works, and among them many of the very early editions which are now rare. I have "Undertones," the volume of poetry published by Edward Moxon in 1863, and "David Grey," published by Sampson Low, Son and Marston in 1868; and I have those later works which he published with such extraordinary rapidity in the intervals of play-writing, theatrical lesseeship, financial worry, and much fierce letter-writing in and out of the newspapers. I have the books which he brought out himself at his own office in order to be his own publisher, "The Ballad of Mary the Mother" and "The Devil's Case," both "published by the author," one in '96 and one in '97.

This idea of being his own publisher was part of what may be called "the unwisdom of Robert Buchanan." He was a man who never quite calculated consequences. When he quarrelled with theatrical managers, he took a theatre himself; when he quarrelled with publishers,

he went into their trade. In both instances the result was unsatisfactory. He brought out a charming piece at a *matinée* at the Adelphi, "The Bride of Love." In it his sister-in-law, Miss Harriet Jay, made a great success. It was hardly the play for the evening bills. It was poetic, dreamy, scholarly ; it was everything but dramatic. Yet, because he wanted it in the evening bills and could not get managers to share his enthusiasm, he took the Lyric Theatre and put up a poetical play with the makeshift *matinée* scenery. By this speculation he lost thousands of pounds, and loaded himself with difficulties which hampered him to the end of his days.

There were as many sides to Robert Buchanan's character as there were to his genius. Over generous to comparative strangers, he was often scarcely just to intimate friends. Bitter, almost malignant, when in a quarrel he took pen in hand, he was tender and gentle as a woman when his sympathies were excited.

My first acquaintance with him came about through a generous letter which he sent me at the time I was publishing my first attempts at verse in narrative form, under the title of "The Dagonet Ballads" and "Ballads of Babylon."

One day this letter came to me, and I need not say brought a glow of pleasure to my cheeks, which at that time were very white, for I was seriously ill and about

to pass from the doctor's hands to those of the surgeon :

5 Larkhall Rise,  
Clapham, December 5, 1880.

Dear Sir,—Permit a disinterested reader to tell you how much he has been surprised and touched by some

Be that as it may

I feel the strength & courage of your poems so much that I send you this hearty cheer. One ballad - in which you tell the story of the poor outcast who seemed the dearest one to me handed - is to me indescribably noble & affecting, & with all the aesthetic imperfections of the period.

I write thus to you, & believe I shall have an opportunity of writing to the public also, before long, in the same theme.

Geo. R. Simcox

Trusting you  
Robert Buchanan

of your "Ballads of Babylon." I know by experience that such testimonies, when they come unexpectedly, sometimes convey pleasure ; and it is also in my mind that long ago, when "I" also wrote poems of Babylon, a generous-hearted friend of yours, the late Mr. Tom Hood, wrote out of the fulness of his heart such words as gave me great content.

Be that as it may, I feel the strength and courage of your poems so much that I send you this hasty brief. One ballad—in which you tell the story of the poor outcast who rescues the clergyman she once branded—is to me indescribably noble and affecting, and worth all the æsthetic jargon of the period.

I write thus to you, and I believe I shall have an opportunity of writing to the public also, before long, on the same theme.—Faithfully yours,

Robert Buchanan.

Geo. R. Sims, Esq.

The writer amply fulfilled his promise shortly afterwards in the pages of the "Contemporary Review."

It was many years later that we came together as workfellows. The Messrs. Gatti proposed to me that I should enter into partnership with Robert Buchanan to supply a series of plays for the Adelphi Theatre. Buchanan had always been a prolific playwright, and his plays were generally big successes or big failures. Years afterwards, when I worked with him almost day by day, and came to know his methods, I ceased to wonder at the inequality of his workmanship. I doubt if any dramatist of culture ever wrote with such rapidity. He wrote straight away, page after page being filled with his neat handwriting, while he smoked the eternal cigarette. There was no looking up at the ceiling, no pausing for the right word. It was this

" writing the scene straight off " that made some of his best work ineffective from the dramatic point of view when it came to a popular playhouse. He despised the exit line, and continued a scene beyond the point at which it attained—speaking theatrically—its climax.

I remember an instance which illustrates this defect. He had to send a party of soldiers into a church to look for a man who was supposed to be concealed there. Here are the lines as he wrote them :

Officer : Enter the church, Sergeant, and bring the fellow out !

Sergeant : Those are your orders, Captain ?

Officer : Yes.

Sergeant : Then I must obey them. Into the church, lads. Follow me !

Of course that was set right at rehearsal, because the sergeant was played by a real sergeant, and the soldiers were real soldiers. The military words of command were substituted, and the sergeant did not argue with his superior officer.

But when writing Buchanan would never dream of stopping for such a detail.

Many of his plays were big financial successes, notably one or two of his adaptations. But in many, where a little care would have made success certain, he came to grief through over rapidity of execution.



He turned out work at a rate which was appalling. He would produce half a dozen plays in a year, and have another half-dozen ready for production. In the pigeon-holes of his study, at Merkland, he had always a score of unacted plays, ranging from comic operas to historical tragedies. On one occasion, when an American manager was in town looking for new plays, Buchanan had an idea which he thought would suit him. In one week he turned the idea into a three-act comedy, took it to the manager, read it to him, received £200 on account, and at the reading threw out an idea for a serious drama. The American manager liked the idea. Buchanan went home, and in three days had a scenario of five-and-twenty pages ready.

And all this time he was correcting the proofs of a book which was about to appear, at work on a long poem, writing daily letters to the papers on a highly controversial subject, and seeing his solicitor with regard to an action at law which was pending.

My collaboration with this tireless worker was always a happy one, because "the Bard," as we liked to call him, was a delightful companion, and his conversation was always brilliant and exhilarating. I spent some of the happiest years of my life in close companionship with Robert Buchanan, and rarely on our "work days," or rather nights, did I quit his hospitable roof till the small hours of the morning.

Here is the letter in which Buchanan acknowledged the suggestion that he should enter into partnership with me to supply Adelphi melodrama. The reference

Dear Mr Sims.

Can call on you tomorrow  
on Thursday before 12, or between 3 and  
5 — morning preferred. Or glad to see you  
here after 5 tomorrow, or on Thursday  
morning. Will you kindly wire your choice?  
It seems urgent that we should together  
at once, as you are going away so soon.

With kindest regards

Truly yours

Robert Buchanan  
B. N. Sims Esq.

How the deuce am I to

collaborate with you in Jerichos?!

to Jericho is explained by the fact that I had written asking him to come to an early decision, as I wanted a holiday, and was thinking of going to the Holy Land ;

Dear Mr. Sims,—Can call on you to-morrow or Thursday before 12, or between 3 and 5—"morning" preferred. Or glad to see you here after 5 to-morrow, or on Thursday morning. Will you kindly wire your choice? It seems urgent that we should forgather at once, as you are going away so soon. With kind regards.—Truly yours,

Robert Buchanan.

G. R. Sims, Esq.

P.S.—How the deuce am I to collaborate with you in Jericho?!

Our first play, "The English Rose," made a good deal of money for all of us. Buchanan sold out after a time, and the Messrs. Gatti and myself gave him £2500 for his share.

Then came "The Trumpet Call," in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell practically made her London début, and we were financially even more successful.

Both "The English Rose" and "The Trumpet Call" are still playing in England and in the United States.

The other plays were not so fortunate. Buchanan had grown tired of Adelphi methods. He had a great poetic scheme in his mind, and he was afraid that his connection with popular melodrama would be against him when he appealed to the critical world with his masterpiece.

I think at this time he was financially worried as well, and neither his heart nor his brain was in his theatrical work.

I will give one more letter because it is signed "The Bard." In the "Times" notice of the admirable life of

*Telegraph  
Savernake Hm.*



*Savernake Forest  
Marlborough.*

*Oct 28,*

*Dear Sarge.*

*I enclosed you a  
bit of scenario, I shall be  
up to-morrow (Saturday) & we  
can then put our acts together.  
I like the idea more & more.*

*Awful weather! Just  
going out to get wet this'*

*The Bard*

her brother-in-law by Miss Harriet Jay the critic objects to the insertion of a "reminiscence" by myself, in which "the Bard" is frequently mentioned. "We could have

done with less of 'the Bard,' " says the critic. Every one has a right to his opinion, but the story of Buchanan's life would have been incomplete without a reference to this phase of it. He was always known as "the Bard," and alluded to as "the Bard" by the little company who gathered constantly at his house on "supper-nights," and at the little Sunday dinner-parties. It was a term of affection and respect bestowed upon him originally, I think, by his friend and frequent companion Mr. Henry Murray ; and Buchanan himself, as the letter shows, had smilingly adopted it. The letter is written from the country seat of that Marquess of Ailesbury who was known to sporting fame as "Ducks." Buchanan was one of a small party staying there for a few days :

Savernake Forest,  
Marlborough,  
Oct. 28.

Dear George,—I enclosed you a bit of scenario. I shall be up to-morrow (Saturday) and we can then put our wits together. I like the idea more and more.

Awful weather ! Just going out to get wet thro'.

The Bard.

I have referred to Miss Jay's story of his life's work and his literary friendships. But there is another book, which may be published one day—the autobiography which Robert Buchanan had himself prepared, and in



which he had frankly set forth his ideas of his contemporaries.

It is probably owing to the frankness with which he has in these pages expressed his personal views that they are being held back. There are many celebrities still living who would be rendered exceedingly uncomfortable by their publication.

## VII

I made the acquaintance of Edmund Yates by calling upon him in answer to the letter which is given below, and which I have inserted in the first edition of "After Office Hours," a collection of his early efforts made during the days when he was still in that Government Department which has given so many brilliant men to literature and journalism—the Post Office.

I had been an admirer of his for many years. I had devoured his novels, and read his delightful notes in the "Morning Star," where he gossiped daily as "Flaneur," and continued that form of "personal" journalism which he may be said to have founded in "The Lounger at the Clubs," written for the "Illustrated Times" in 1855. Out of "The Lounger at the Clubs" grew eventually the idea that brought Yates fame and fortune—the "World." The "World" had been started nearly five years when the little note reached me that was to make me a lifelong friend :

3 Portland Place, W.,  
April 22, '79.

My dear Sir,—If you have any leisure, I should be very glad to avail myself of your services, were you so disposed.

3. PORTLAND PLACE. W

*April 22. 79.*

*My dear Sir*

*If you have any leisure, I should be very glad to avail myself of your services, were you so disposed.*

*If you would call on me here any morning before 12, we might have a chat*

*Faithfully yours,*

*Edmund Yates.*

*G. R. Sims, Esq.*

If you would call on me here any morning before twelve, we might have a chat.—Faithfully yours,

Edmund Yates.

G. R. Sims, Esq.

Yates was anxious that I should write a series of "poems" for the "World" in the style of "The Dagonet Ballads." I accepted the commission, and "The Ballads of Babylon" duly appeared in the journal. Among them was "Ostler Joe," which years afterwards was to make such a sensation in Washington and to give Mrs. Brown Potter to the stage.

I did not stay on the "World" very long, as the theatre suddenly became a source of large profit to me, and I had my hands full of dramatic work. But from the day I first met Yates in Portland Place to that sad night in May 1894, when he sank down in the stalls of the Garrick Theatre, stricken with the mortal illness that in a few hours was to end his life, he was my constant and generous friend.

I remember when "The Lights of London" was produced at the Princess's Theatre there was one notice sent out to several of the provincial papers which was evidently intentionally spiteful. The writer said, "This play will serve one useful purpose: it will surely for a number of evenings keep a certain number of disreputable people of both sexes less dangerously employed than they would be in the streets."

Yates saw the notice in a provincial paper, cut it out, and sent it to me with the following note:

Keep this and find out the writer. I have found it useful all my life to know who my enemies are.

I do not think I took the trouble, but I was grateful to the busy man who in many ways afterwards did me substantial service.

One more letter of his I may be pardoned for inserting here, because it is connected with a colleague of mine. The letter was written in 1880 :

3 Portland Place, W.

Wednesday, January 7, 1880.

My dear Mr. Sims,—Will you oblige me by showing this note to "Carados"—I have not the faintest idea who he is—and ask him if he would favour me with five minutes' business chat? I am always here up to twelve o'clock, or we might make another appointment.—Sincerely yours,

Edmund Yates.

I called on Yates, because at that time the identity of "Carados," of the "Referee," was a secret, and explained why I could not send the rightful owner of that signature to him.

I cannot remember now what Yates wanted with "Carados." It could not have been for dramatic work on the "World," as in 1880 Mr. Dutton Cook was still the dramatic critic.

Dutton Cook, a letter from whom I have inserted in "Nights at the Play," remained the "World's" representative until his death, in 1883. In 1884 Mr. William Archer took up the appointment, and the "World" has



never since been without the brilliant criticisms of "W. A."

Dutton Cook's letter is written to Mr. Henry Sampson, who was then editing "Tom Hood's Annual."

I remember as I write a conversation I had with Yates when, after a serious illness, I went to Brighton to recruit. He was living there then, and came to see me. He expounded a theory that every seven years men are subject to some organic change, during which they are liable to serious illnesses. "If they get over that period," he said, "they generally go on for another seven years without much trouble. I have experienced these changes myself. I am all right now ; but I dread sixty-three. I have an idea that it will be a crucial age for me."

Serious illness came to Edmund Yates about that time. His friends noticed a grave alteration in his manner and appearance. He went away in the winter, and remained in the South of France. But he came back in the spring. Mr. Clement Scott described his appearance that fatal night at the Garrick Theatre as painful to all his old friends. There was a look in the face that made men turn to each other and whisper. The play was only just over when Yates fell heavily to the ground, and was carried back to the Savoy Hotel, where his wife was waiting for him. He never

spoke again, but died during the night. The serious illness came at the age he had looked forward to with

40 Douglass St.  
Hicksville N.Y.  
23 June 1875.

My dear Sir. I have revised the story.  
which, of course, only pretends to be a gift for Lewis.  
and I think strengthen the conclusion. Though  
I could not adopt your suggestion altogether, fearing  
I could say nothing new about a phantom  
in the way of describing it. Should the new matter  
be in glass, if the addition regard No. 1. and  
then a cut may be made on the 20.1. and  
generally, please, use your own discretion where  
pruning may be necessary to bring the story  
down to the proper dimensions. I will be true  
content with such action in the matter as you  
may think expedient.  
Always yours faithfully  
Dutton Cook

Edmund Yates

foreboding. He died before he had completed his sixty-third year.

The two most painful episodes of Edmund Yates' career were his quarrel with Thackeray, which led to his leaving the Garrick Club, and his imprisonment for the libel on Lord Lonsdale published in the "World." In the former case the sufferer was a young man who had written a gossiping article which to-day would be thought nothing of, in the latter the editor of the "World" went to prison rather than break through an honourable editorial rule and give up the name of the writer of the offending paragraphs.

He was a delightful novelist, with a good deal of the Dickens influence upon him ; but it was by the founding of "Society" journalism as we understand it to-day that he made his abiding mark.

When the "World" was started, one of the persons most interested in its success was Yates's old friend John Forster. Forster is best known to the public to-day by his life of Dickens, but he was an indefatigable biographer. He died in harness, having just completed the first volume of his life of Swift. He was for some years editor of the "Examiner," and for about eleven months editor of the "Daily News." Forster had the reputation of being obstinate and overbearing, but those who knew him intimately spoke of him always as a generous and tender-hearted man.

The following letter, written in 1851, I have inserted in his "Life of Oliver Goldsmith" :

58 Lincoln's Inn Fields,  
1st Dec. 1851.

Dear Sir,—I am afraid I shall shock your printer by the extent of my corrections—but I could not else make sense out of it. I have now certainly supplied the substance of what I said—such as this proof suggested it to me. If you could let me see a revise I would return it to you “by the bearer”—if the printer's boy who brings it be instructed to wait.—Always yours truly,

John Forster.

*Printer's boy who brings it  
be instructed to wait.*

*Always yours truly  
John Forster*

John Forster died in 1876, leaving a most valuable library, which he bequeathed to the South Kensington Museum. Included in his bequest were the principal Dickens MSS. Yates says of him, “Most people who knew him would be of the cabman's opinion, that

Mr. John Forster was a very 'harbitrary gent,' but to me he was, I am bound to say, always friendly and helpful. It was through Dickens's influence and recommendation mainly, no doubt, that he made me an exception to his general rule ; but I think he also had a personal regard for me."



## VIII

In 1887, the year in which Walter Besant wrote me the following letter—a letter which I have inserted in "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," the famous book he wrote after death had ended his long and prosperous collaboration with James Rice—we were working together on the plot of a play that never got beyond the plot.

I had known Besant for a good many years, but it was not until the end of 1886 that we came together in a kind of literary, or rather dramatic, partnership. The partnership never passed the initial stage, but it was a very delightful one to me.

It gave me many happy hours in the society of a man whose companionship was helpful and exhilarating, and one memorable day which I spent with him in his native town of Portsmouth. In the few hours we wandered there together he gave me a new interest in the famous old seaport. He showed it me as I had never seen it before.

Our play was to be a Portsmouth play. We went down to look at certain scenes which we had determined to put on the stage. There was a commission for the work. I had secured that from the Messrs. Gatti before we commenced. The piece was to be done at the Adelphi, and William Terris, whom Besant thought an ideal actor for a young naval officer, was to play the hero.

But something happened before we got very far with the scenario. Besant was very busily engaged on other work, and time was pressing. In the most generous manner possible he one day came to me and said that, if I did not mind, he would prefer to stand out of the contract, and let me go back to my old collaborator, Henry Pettitt. I did so, and together we wrote a nautical play. It was "The Harbour Lights," which ran for over five hundred nights at the Adelphi, and in the provinces is running still.

Here is the letter which Besant wrote me at the time we were arranging to meet and talk over the dramatic scheme :

12 Gayton Crescent, Hampstead.

My dear Sims,—I will walk down the hill—if there is no fog—on Sunday morning.

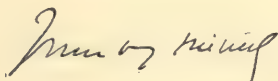
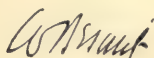
I am glad you like my Cowboy's Story. It isn't "Buffalo Bill" at all. Three out of the four situations in the story are his own personal experiences, and Mike

Alison — the real name — was really his friend and rescuer. He was only seventeen when he had these lively adventures.—Yours very sincerely,

W. Besant.

24/11/87.

Walter Besant was a many-sided man. He was interested in art, in French literature, and in Palestine,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Walter Besant'.A second handwritten signature in cursive script, also appearing to read 'Walter Besant'.

in London ancient and modern, and in the work and the pleasure of the people. The People's Palace, in which he took such an interest, was a fabric built on a dream, the dream to which he gave form in one of his books. He intended it to be a palace of delight for the toilers of mean streets and dull neighbourhoods. It was not his fault that the idea was better than the execution.

In the midst of his continuous output of romance, he devoted himself to the stern realities around him. He was an active philanthropist, and one of the most earnest students of London life. His books on London are classics to-day. And with all this he was the doughty champion of his brethren of the craft. He

founded the Incorporated Society of Authors, edited the "Author," and was always to the front on the question of copyright, the grievances of authors, and the injustices of a certain class of publishers. Few literary men have lived more useful, more strenuous lives than Walter Besant. He was indeed a knight of the pen, and literature was honoured in its most honoured son when he was bidden to arise "Sir Walter."

The reference in the letter quoted is to a story he wrote as the Christmas number of "All the Year Round," "I'll tell thee, Dick, where I have been." It is interesting to know that the incidents in this charming tale were all true, and within the personal knowledge of the author.

Here is one more letter of Besant's, which I give because it is written from the Incorporated Society of Authors, the society for which he worked so loyally and with all his heart and soul. The postscript is characteristic. Besant, like many busy men, resented rumours of his illness and incapacity for work.

Incorporated Society of Authors.

My dear Sims,—I am very glad to hear that you are coming. Where will you sit? With the guests or with the humbler fry like myself?—Yours ever,

W. Besant.

July 12/88.

P.S.—I am "not" ill—I am "not" ordered away—I

LORD TENNYSON, D.C.L.,

PRESIDENT.

INCORPORATED SOCIETY OF AUTHORS,

WALTER BESANT,

CHAIRMAN.

4, PORTUGAL STREET,

ALEX. GALT ROSS, B.A.,

HON. SEC:

LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,

JAS. STANLEY LITTLE,

EXECUTIVE SEC:

W.C.

1

My dear Sirs

I am very glad to hear that  
you are improving—where will you  
sit with the guests or with the  
humbler party like myself?

Yours ever

W. Besant

P.S. I am not ill—I am not ordered away—I am not  
unable to write (see World of this week),

am "not" unable to write (see "World" of this week).



Writing of one collaboration that never reached the practical stage, I am reminded of another.

The works of F. W. Robinson, the novelist, had been my favourite reading as a youth. Who does not remember "Owen: a Waif," and "Mattie: a Stray," "The House of Elmore," "Slaves of the Ring," "Grandmother's Money"? But the book that I liked best, perhaps, of all, because from the first I took an intense interest in all that concerns crime and criminals, was his "Female Life in Prison."

When I made the acquaintance of the author who had delighted me for so many years, it was through the introduction of Savile Clarke, who was one of my most intimate journalistic friends, and a member of a little Bohemian club where I spent more of the night, as a rule, than was good for me—the Unity, in Holywell Street.

I had told Savile Clarke that I had been reading a book of Robinson's in which I thought there was some good dramatic stuff that might be used on the stage. The book was "Carry's Confession." Savile Clarke told Robinson, and brought us together. After his first visit to me, Robinson sent me the following letter, which I have inserted in the book to which it refers :

30 St. James's Road, Brixton, S.W.

28/3/90.

Dear Mr. Sims,—Here are the books. "Carry's Confession" page 276 and finishing on pp. 317 to 32 are dramatic I fancy.

The "Very Strange Family" will remind you, when

Let me take this  
opportunity of thanking you  
for your very hearty welcome  
to Clarence Terrace —  
it was a real pleasure to  
me to meet Joseph &  
Elizabeth  
Yours very truly  
F. W. Robinson  
Per R. Sims Esq

you have leisure to read it, of the book you mentioned yesterday, "Under the Spell."

Let me take this opportunity of thanking you for your very hearty welcome to Clarence Terrace—it was a real pleasure to me to meet "Dagonet."

Kind regards,

Yours very truly,

F. W. Robinson.

Geo. R. Sims, Esq.

We met several times afterwards, once at a club where the members sat and played chess in a room the walls of which were lined with fish in glass cases. It was during an evening spent at this club that Robinson told me of the interest which he took in all that concerned police and crime, and more especially the hidden life of the criminal after he had become a convict. "The Diary of a Prison Matron" was practically written by Robinson. Singularly enough, almost the last work he did was a series of sketches of life and character at the police courts. These sketches appeared in the "Daily Graphic."

About that time I had found the opportunity I wanted of using the incidents in "Carry's Confession" in connection with a scheme which would have appealed to Robinson immensely, as it embraced certain phases of prison life on which he was an authority. I drew out the plan, and was about to write to him asking him to make an appointment, when I heard that he was

seriously ill. Soon afterwards I read that he had passed away.

It was Mr. Robinson who, when editing a magazine, "Home Chimes," introduced Jerome K. Jerome and the "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow" to the reading world. Some of Mr. J. M. Barrie's "Auld Licht Idylls" first appeared in Mr. Robinson's magazine. He may be said to share with Dr. Robertson Nicoll, the scholarly editor of the "British Weekly," the honour of having discovered the man who immortalised Thrums.

## IX

I knew George Augustus Sala first in the old Bohemian days of Fleet Street. That is to say, I knew him by meeting him constantly at dinners and public gatherings. But for nearly twenty years it was only a formal acquaintance. It was not until 1890 that we began a correspondence. After that we became friends, and in the last years of his life I saw and knew as much of Sala as any one did.

He was one of the early "Fun" contributors, but before I had joined the staff, in 1874, he had dropped away. I found a letter from him the other day addressed to the editor, in which he gave his reasons. The rate of remuneration was not sufficient for a man who in the 'seventies was in the zenith of his fame as a journalist, and who, in his own words, was travelling for the "Daily Telegraph" with the salary of an ambassador. Sala had roughed it in his early days. I heard him, long years ago at a public dinner, declare that many a night as a boy he had slept behind the



piled-up baskets of Covent Garden and had known the hunger pain.

He began to work somewhere about the age of fifteen, and his name appears among the illustrators of Reach and Albert Smith's "Man in the Moon." But his first real chance came when Charles Dickens started "Household Words." Sala was one of the first contributors, and in after life he was always grateful to "Boz." He wrote in his memoir of the great novelist, "The first five pounds which I ever earned in literature came from his kind hand." It was for Dickens he went to Russia and wrote "A Journey Due North," the first of a series of chatty travel books which Sala continued to pour out almost to the end of his career.

When the Levy-Lawsons bought the "Telegraph," and lifted it out of the slough into one of the most popular journals of the day, Sala was appointed special correspondent, and his style was so marked that it became quite the thing for the comic journalists of the day to imitate it. The initials "G. A. S." were better known for years than any other initials before the public, and Sala was not only one of the chief of the young lions of the "Telegraph," but a voluminous contributor to periodicals and magazines. "The Prince of Specials" was the title he was proudest of, but he wrote a good many novels, some of them in such a hurry that he did not quite know how to wind them up ;

and he poured out booklets and pamphlets on every conceivable subject, from "The Taming of Mrs. Cruiser" to an essay on a draper's establishment at Liverpool.

His greatest success in the book line was "Twice Round the Clock," a series of light London sketches originally published in the "Welcome Guest." It is in a first edition of "Twice Round the Clock" that I have inserted the following letter :

36 Medina Terrace,  
Hove, Brighton,  
Sunday, November 30, 1890.

Dear Mr. Sims,—I have been reading with intense interest and genuine pleasure your admirable article on Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum ; but you won't mind my telling you (I hope) that mad murderers were treated with kindness and consideration in England long before Broadmoor was built ; and there are "not" many of us (not being all Grand Old Men) old enough to remember when the treatment of the insane was a black blot on our civilisation. Absolute cruelty to lunatics in public asylums practically ceased in 1815, when the horrible old Bedlam in Moorfields was demolished, and the new Bethlehem Hospital was built in St. George's Fields ; and by 1839 all mechanical restraints had been banished, not only thence, but from the county asylums for pauper lunatics.

I remember, full thirty years ago, being shown over Bedlam by the resident physician, Dr.—afterwards Sir—Charles Hood. Criminal lunatics were at that time

among the inmates ; their maintenance being paid for by Government. The murderers' ward was the counterpart of the one which you have so graphically described in the "Referee." The assassins read, smoked, played cards and chess, and so forth ; while the homicidal women had their bird-cages, window-

*I had a long talk with Edward Oxford, the conceited pot-boy who shot at the Queen, and who had in Bedlam since 1841. He was quite sane, and had always been so, the doctor said. There also, busy at his easel, was Dadd the painter-parricide, and on the women's side, at fancy needle-work, was Mrs Brough, the Queen's wet-nurse who, in an access of puerperal fever, had murdered two or three of her children. It was not until 1863 that the criminal lunatics were removed from Bedlam to Broadmoor. I could say more, but it is so infernally cold that my fingers can scarcely hold the pen.*

*G. R. Sims, Esq.*

*Faithfully yours G. A. Sala.*

gardens, and piano. I had a long talk with Edward Oxford, the conceited pot-boy who shot at the Queen, and who had been in Bedlam since 1841. He was quite sane, "and had always been so," the doctor said. There also, busy at his easel, was Dadd the painter-parricide ; and on the women's side, at fancy needle-work, was Mrs. Brough, the Queen's wet-nurse, who, in an access of puerperal fever, had murdered two or three of her children. It was not until "1863" that the criminal lunatics were removed from Bedlam to Broadmoor. I could say more ; but it is so infernally cold that my fingers can scarcely hold the pen.

Faithfully yours,

G. A. Sala.

G. R. Sims, Esq.

The letter was called forth by an account I had given of a visit I had recently paid to Broadmoor, where I played whist with some famous murderers, and in the evening assisted at the patients' ball, when I had the honour of dancing with some famous murderesses.

Sala wrote a marvellously neat hand. Some of his copy in his early days was absolutely copper-plate. He had been apprenticed to an engraver, which may have had something to do with the neatness of his handwriting. In one of his books, "Breakfast in Bed," I have inserted the complete MS. of a sketch of his, "Cloudy Memories of an Old Passport : One Day in Denmark."

The commencement which is here reproduced will show what marvellous "copy" Sala's was, and how delightful it must have been to printers in the days when the typewriter was not invented, and every man wrote his own hand. Some of these hands were so terrible that when the copy came to a printing-office experts familiar with the caligraphy of the author had to be specially engaged. Two notable instances were the late Walter Thornbury and the late Dean Stanley. The present writer's hand was at one time the despair of the composing-room, and once, at a meeting of compositors on Clerkenwell Green, a specimen of it was produced and received with groans.

Here is a sample of Sala's beautiful "copy" :



CLOUDY MEMORIES OF AN OLD PASSPORT

II

One Day in Denmark

A tramp through the streets of Copenhagen on a raw spring morning is not the most interesting promenade in the world. Moreover, it was Sunday; and a Lutheran Sunday in high latitudes is more remarkable than agreeable. It is a cross between the bitter, frowning, scowling red-hot poker Sabbath, as it is observed in Scotland and, to a modified extent, in England, and the gay and festive Continental "Dimanche" or "Domenica"—call it what you will. The Protestant religion as understood by Danish and Swedish Lutherans (the surly Prussians are

*Cloudy memories of an old Passport.*

*One day in Denmark.*

*A tramp through the streets of Copenhagen on a raw spring morning is not the most interesting promenade in the world. Moreover it was Sunday; and a Lutheran Sunday in high latitudes is more remarkable than agreeable. It is a cross between the bitter, frowning, scowling, red-hot poker Sabbath, as it is observed in Scotland, and, to a modified extent, in England, and the gay and festive continental Dimanche, or Domenica:—call it what you will. The Protestant religion as understood by Danish and Swedish Lutherans (the surly Prussians are*

Some time since I told in another place the story of Sala's—so far as I know—solitary attempt at play-writing. It was a burlesque of "Wat Tyler, M.P.," and was produced at the Gaiety Theatre in 1869, under the management of my friend Mr. John Hollingshead.



Sala came of theatrical stock. His father was connected with the management of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket. His mother, Madame Sala, sang at Covent Garden. Sala himself, at the age of seventeen, was assistant to Mr. William Beverley, the scene painter, and helped at the Princess's Theatre at a salary of fifteen shillings a week.

He had been sketching for illustrated periodicals and "penny dreadfuls" until 1848, when at the age of twenty he definitely entered the field of journalism. His first book, produced in 1850, was "Hail, Rain, Sunshine, Speed," a guide for Continental tourists, which he wrote and illustrated himself. It was in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, that he wrote his first article in "Household Words." In '55 Henry Vizetelly brought out the "Illustrated Times," and Sala was engaged. The editor of the "Daily Telegraph," struck by a leader in the "Illustrated Times," asked Edmund Yates if he knew the writer. Yates gave Sala's name, and he was at once engaged for "the largest circulation," on which he was a bright particular star till within a few years of his death.

In early life, at the age of six in fact, Sala had a serious attack of measles. While he was recovering, owing to his being left in a draught, he lost his sight. In time he recovered the use of one eye, but the sight of the right eye was never restored.

In 1891 things were still going well with him, and he was occupying a handsome flat in Victoria Street. I remember a dinner-party there, of which the amusing menu is in his own handwriting :

21. Jun 1891.

Menu.

Lakouska à la Russe  
Consommé aux Pointes d'Asperges.  
Fruites aux Pointes d'Asperges.  
Sauce à l'Ours Polaire.  
Filets de Sole à la Cardinal

Filets de Boeuf mignons à la moelle épinière  
Chaufroid de Cailles en aspic.

Selle d'Agneau rôtie à l'Anglaise  
Patés Froids Tomates Ravaudées  
Asperges en Branches.

Les Quatre Héros à l'Indienne.  
(Combinaison Salazquet).

Pouding glacé  
Babas & Co. "Winterdeeg."  
Croissants de Fromage.

Desserts.

Peyold chestnuts à la Joe Miller  
mustard and Cress à la Soria

Sala & Co.  
Refreshment Contractors.  
125. Victoria St. S. W.

Sala loved good things, and was an expert in the gastronomic art.

Soon after 1891 his health began to fail. He started a weekly periodical, "Sala's Journal," but it was not a success. He died at Brighton, on Sunday, December 8, 1895, in his sixty-seventh year. He had had a long and wearing illness, and at one time was delirious. In this state he lived his old life over again, and was constantly under the impression that he was assisting at some of the brilliant pageants which he had so marvellously described in the "Daily Telegraph." But he grew calmer towards the close, and the end came painlessly and peacefully.

## X

I first saw General Boulanger, one New Year's morning many a long year ago, in the courtyard of the Hôtel du Louvre, in Paris. The courtyard was then the courtyard of the hotel ; to-day it is covered in, and with the hotel has become part of the great Magasin du Louvre. In those days the hotel was separate from the Magasin, but in the courtyard there was a door leading to the " Administration."

On this New Year's morning the employés of the Magasin had gathered together in the courtyard in order to go in a body and wish "*la bonne année*" to the chief of the great enterprise. I was in the courtyard watching them, when my attention was attracted by a small single-horse brougham, which stood waiting for some one. I noticed that there were double reins ; one set the coachman held, and the other set was fastened round the splashboard of the brougham in front of the coachman's seat.

" Whose brougham is that ? " I asked.

"It is the brougham of General Boulanger. He lives always in the Hôtel du Louvre."

A few minutes later "le brav' Général" came out in full array. He was on his way to pay some New Year calls. I turned to a friend who was with me, and said, "General Boulanger is not a brave man. He proves his cowardice by that double set of reins."

I met Boulanger frequently after that, and I saw a good deal of him in London when he was living in Portland Place. In common with a distinguished English actor, he could not wear a high hat ; it always slipped on to one side of his head or on to the back. At Kempton Park one day I watched him backing horses. He wagered small amounts ; but his face wore an anxious look all through the race. Once, when his horse came in second, I heard him sigh. The book-makers soon learned who the little Frenchman in the waggling high hat was, and I gathered from the conversation that they were disappointed. They had expected to see a hero, after the wonderful picture of the General on his famous black charger which had been reproduced by our English illustrated papers. "He'll never do any good, if looks go for anything," said one prominent metalician to me ; and I intimated that I had formed that opinion long ago.

The card given below, "Général Boulanger, with his sincerest thanks," was sent by him to M. Georges



Jacobi, at that time musical director of the Alhambra, and M. Jacobi gave it to me the day after he received it:

*General Boulanger*  
*avec ses bien sincères*  
*remerciements*

I was in Paris the night that Boulanger waited for the result of the elections at the Restaurant Durand, in the Place de la Madeleine, and the supreme moment came when he had Paris at his feet and was afraid of his own triumph. The tragedy that ended the General's life was—I say it with every sympathy for the unfortunate man—a tragedy of cowardice. But Boulanger had been forced by fate into a position for which he was totally unfitted. He was indeed a lath painted to look like iron. When the wind blew the lath bent. When the storm arose the lath broke. He committed suicide because he had lost the one human being who still had faith in him. When she was gone he had no faith in himself.

Henri Rochefort, whose card and handwriting I give below, was for a long time my friend and neighbour in Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park. The card he sent to

me the day he quitted London for Paris. Seeing what his attitude to the country that gave him hospitality has been since, one might almost say the day he shook the soil of England from his feet.

*Il m'a fait merci pour votre bon  
souvenir, mon cher confrère, mais  
vous n'avez pas fini avec moi  
Henri Rochefort  
Car mon intention est de revenir  
souvent dans la grande ville de  
London*

A thousand thanks for your kind remembrance, my dear confrère, but you have not finished with me, for my intention is to come back often to the great city of London.

Rochefort was a remarkable figure, with his erect bearing, his French features, and his wealth of piled-up snowy hair. All the cabmen knew him, and I am bound to say liked him, for he was generous to a degree. To me he was always delightfully amiable, and he took a great fancy to Robert Buchanan, at whose house I met him more than once.

He was very fond of horses, and had a pair that used to be taken regularly every morning to his front door to be fed with sugar.

Once I took him to the Moore and Burgess Minstrels, and that was an entertainment he never forgot. He could not understand it at all. "They black their faces and sing about dead children," he said, when I had translated a song. "But you English are marvellous. Indeed, it is true that you take your pleasure sadly."

Rochefort told me that he had never tried to learn English because he was afraid that it would spoil his style. But Mademoiselle Marguerite, his beautiful niece, who accompanied him everywhere, learnt it and spoke it very prettily. It was she who always told the cabmen where to drive to when Rochefort wanted to attend a picture sale. A picture sale was his favourite hobby, and he was a frequent buyer. The reader will see that his farewell message to me breathes friendship to England. I suppose the exigencies of the situation in France compelled him to alter his views, so far, at least, as he printed them in "L'Intransigeant."

Turning from two Parisians in London, I take down a volume written by a Londoner who knew and loved his London, and had its story at the tips of his fingers, from which it was continually running down into his pen. Walter Thornbury was one of the most industrious of literary men. He was a novelist, a poet,

an art critic, a traveller, a biographer, and a prince of Bohemia. In the year 1874, when the letter was written which I have placed in his "Haunted London," I was assisting in getting up a benefit for a popular low comedian, who, though not often on the stage now, is "still" a popular low comedian. So it came about that Walter Thornbury's characteristic letter enclosing money for two stalls came into my possession. Thornbury, as will be seen by the sample, wrote a puzzling hand. It was nearly as bad as Dean Stanley's. There are two words in his letter, the two preceding the signature, which I never was able to decipher, and I cannot now :

13 Abingdon Villas, Kensington, W.  
November 10, 1874.

My dear Low very lo. Comedian,—Please send me 2 stalls for your benefit—though far from flush after 4 months' illness and idleness. I enclose the xes—borrowed, of course. Right you are, &c. &c.

Yours truly,

A. B. C. Odell, Esq.

G. Walter Thornbury.

Thornbury, in addition to his terrific output in the book line, wrote hundreds of sketches and short stories for "Chambers's Journal," "Household Words," and "All the Year Round." He travelled in Spain and

Savage Club,

Covent Garden, W.C.

13 abingdon hills  
 Kensington W  
 Nov 10 1874  
 My dear Mr. May. Co. London

Please send me <sup>2</sup> Bells  
 to your benevolent. I have been  
 down since after 4 months  
 illness & recovery. I have not been  
 - borrowed of course - with pleasure  
 in this life  
 Sir - May  
 I thank you very  
 much for the Bells  
 A B C. Odell Esq



Turkey and the United States, and wrote his experiences, but his travels in "Haunted London" will, I think, carry his name farthest into the years to come. He was a marvellous worker, and was slaving away till within a few days of his death. He died suddenly in 1876, a victim to ceaseless production at high pressure. He was only forty-eight when the blow fell, and the pen dropped from the dead hand that had been tireless in life.

## XI

I have a number of plays written by John Baldwin Buckstone bound together, and in the volume I have inserted not only a letter written by the eminent author-actor-manager of the famous theatre in the Haymarket, but also a most interesting document in his own handwriting and signed by him. That document is the original draft of the address presented to Charles Dickens in acknowledgment of his presiding at the festival of the Royal General Theatrical Fund :

To Charles Dickens, Esq.

Sir,—With every feeling of respect and gratitude, the Directors of the General Theatrical Fund Association take this opportunity of thanking you, not only for your presidency on this occasion, but for your constant and valuable presence at every anniversary festival held in its behalf.

From the commencement of this institution you have been its best friend, and the Directors hope that for many years to come they may continue to rejoice in

the possession of your great services, zeal, and warm wishes.

(Signed) By order of the Directors,

John B. Buckstone, Chairman.

To Charles Dickens Esq

With every feeling of respect and gratitude,  
The Directors of The General Theatrical Fund  
associate, take this opportunity of thanking  
you, not only for your presidency on this  
occasion, but for your constant and valuable  
presence, at every anniversary festival held  
in its behalf.

From the commencement of this institution  
you have been its best friend, and the Directors  
hope that for many years to come they may  
continue to rejoice in ~~its~~<sup>the</sup> progress, the prosperity of your  
~~cause~~<sup>work</sup>, and the success of all  
your great services, zeal, and warm  
wishes.

Syn

By order of the Directors  
John B. Buckstone  
Chairman

It was at a dinner of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, when Buckstone was chairman, that he told the remarkable story of his early career. He was one of a company of strolling actors, and he told how on one occasion he had walked from Northampton to London on 4½d. He wore a costume made up of his own well-

worn clothes and a chintz waistcoat which he used to play country boys in, and carried in his hand a bundle which contained a red wig and a pair of russet boots—his theatrical wardrobe. His walking boots were a pair of old dancing pumps tied up at the heels with packthread. He walked forty miles the first day, and thirty-two the second, arriving at the "Mother Redcap," Camden Town, with just enough money among the company to pay for a pint of porter.

At the time he made this speech Buckstone was already the lessee and manager of the Haymarket Theatre. It was at the Haymarket that I remember Buckstone, for his great Adelphi successes, "Green Bushes" and "The Flowers of the Forest," were already melodramatic classics when I was born. My first remembrance of his acting was in the part of Asa Trenchard, in Tom Taylor's "Our American Cousin," a play made memorable by Sothorn's wonderful Lord Dundreary, an impersonation that took the town by storm. Then my memory carries me on through the Gilbertian era, when "The Palace of Truth," "Pygmalion and Galatea," and "The Wicked World" were drawing all London. My last remembrance of Buckstone was in connection with a first night, when my friend Dillon Croker, happily still with us, and Mr. F. G. Westmacott Chapman, since passed away, produced, at the Haymarket, a burlesque version of a famous old

classic, called "Love's Paradise," in which Mrs. Alfred Mellon played a part. This play was not a great success, and I met Buckstone wandering about at the back of the dress circle, and was introduced to him, and had a few minutes' conversation with him. That was almost the end of the "Bucky" régime—we all called him "Bucky" in those days. He died on the 30th of October 1879, a few weeks after Mr. John S. Clarke had organised for him at the Haymarket a series of farewell benefit performances.

Buckstone had a remarkable personality on the stage, and "imitations of popular actors" always included him. He was a player for nearly sixty years, and was during one period of his life the most popular character-actor in London.

His life has yet to be written. I was talking only a week or two ago with Mr. John Lane, the publisher, on this very subject, and I believe that he has at present a life of John Baldwin Buckstone in contemplation. It will be deeply interesting as a picture of theatrical life and literature in the early and mid-Victorian eras.

When Buckstone took the Haymarket Theatre he succeeded Benjamin Webster. Webster was one of the leading actors at the Olympic with Madame Vestris. He "starred" with Madame Celeste, and there are plenty of middle-aged playgoers to-day who could prate to you by the hour of the Webster régime at the



Adelphi, of his Robert Landry in "The Dead Heart," and his Joey Ladle in "No Thoroughfare," the Charles Dickens-Wilkie Collins play in which Fechter made such a deep impression as Obenreizer.

But the greatest fame came to Webster, perhaps, when he played Penn Holder in his own play, adapted from the French, "One Touch of Nature." It is in a copy of this play that I have inserted the following letter. It was written by Webster to his son, and from his son it passed to me :

Bognor, July 1st.

My dear Ben,—I hope that you are getting well and can soon return here. All are well here, and it is beautiful weather.

I saw Shirley Brooks at the Newspaper Fund dinner, and he promised to send his contribution to-day or to-morrow to the Adelphi. Strange to say I have never heard from Theodore Martin.

Your affectionate Father,

B. Webster.

Benjamin Webster retired from the stage in 1874. I saw him in the last original part he played, Rodin the Jesuit, in a version of "The Wandering Jew" by Leopold Lewis. In one scene he had to kneel. He was so feeble that he could not rise without the assistance quickly rendered him by Mr. James Fernandez, who

was playing in the same scene. Webster died in 1882. His daughter was the wife of Sir Edward Lawson. Had this gentle and charming lady lived she would to-day have been a peeress.

In March 1874 a farewell benefit performance was

Bognor 28/10/74

My dear Wyn

I hope that you are getting well & can soon return here. All are well here & it is beautiful weather.

I saw Shirley Brooks at the Newmarket fund dinner & he promised to send his contribution today or tomorrow to the Adelphi. Strange to say I have never heard from Frederick Martin.

Yours affectionately  
F. Martin

given for him at Drury Lane. The amount realised was over £2000. Webster was the last manager of the old Adelphi, pulled down in 1858, and the first manager of the new Adelphi, built on the old site.

Webster produced several plays by Sheridan Knowles at the Haymarket, among them "The Love Chase," in '37, almost immediately after the commencement of his

lesseeship. The first play was "The Bridal," adapted from Beaumont and Fletcher. I give these details because in the printed prompt copy of Sheridan Knowles' "The Hunchback"—the cut and marked copy—I have inserted a Sheridan Knowles letter. The author of "The Hunchback" is writing to a collaborator whom he addresses as Beaumont, and signs himself Fletcher :

1 Park Street, Torquay, Devon.

My dear Beaumont,—A happy New Year, and many a one, to you, Mrs. Bm., and yours—God bless you ! I should be glad to hear from you, if only to hear that you continue well, and that all you have are well. Mrs. Knowles heartily joins me in kind wishes to all. Remember me to Miss Andrew, Mr. John, Mr. Wilkinson, and Lady Gladys and family.

Poor Fletcher has had a slight shock of paralysis, but homœopathy, with the blessing of God, has brought him round. The novel will be out, I expect, before the end of the month. I think you will like it—who does not like his own offspring ?

Send me all the news you can, for this is a dull, dull place.

I was attacked last week—speech and right side affected—the symptoms, thank God, quite gone. They were not "severe"—not "very." Stomach, I believe, they say is.

I keep up teetotalism. What shall we set about next ? The time is coming "when no man can work."

God's Mournful Will be done !

Yours affectionately,

Fletcher,

Vulgarly called J. S. Knowles.

Beaumont—the matchless !

“ Keep the attack to yourself.”

*What shall we do about —  
meat — The house is coming down  
no more can look*

*God's Mournful Will be done*

*Yours affectionately*

*Fletcher  
vulgarly, called J. S. Knowles*

*Beaumonts — the matchless !*

*Keep the attack to yourself.*

Sheridan Knowles, many of whose plays—notably “The Love Chase” and “The Hunchback”—hold the stage to this day, was an Irishman. He was in his time a soldier, a doctor, a schoolmaster, an actor, a poet, a novelist, and a dramatist, and at one period he preached at Exeter Hall.

In 1862, being in his seventy-eighth year, he was entertained at a public banquet in his native city of Cork, and died a few months afterwards.

The letter I have reproduced is interesting. The desire to conceal from the public the ravages of ill-health is common to the busy, eager brain-toilers of the world. “The time is coming when no man can work” is the haunting idea that induces much of the melancholy characteristic of the literary temperament.



## XII

As I take from my library shelf "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age," by William Ewart Gladstone, and open it and read the letter which is here given, my memory wanders back over the years when I was a devout Gladstonian, giving all the hero worship that was in me to this giant of the halcyon days of the Liberalism in which I was reared. My grandfather was one of the leaders of the Chartist movement, and a fervent politician. In my younger days John Bright and Gladstone were constantly held up to me as my grandfather's ideals of men of the people. I began my journalistic life as an ardent Gladstonian, and under the editorship of Ashton Dilke, at that time member for Newcastle, I flung myself eagerly into the fight between Disraeli and Gladstone which was then raging. I saw much of the venerable statesman in his later days, and heard him speak not only in the House, but at several banquets which were not of the political order. Then came a time when his grip of the great public relaxed,

when it was the fashion to forget his glorious past, and chaff his collars and make merry over his birthday axe.

The following letter was written to Mr. John

found for me the opportunity  
 by some than I had ex-  
 pected, and I have read  
 the whole with great  
 interest and much ad-  
 miration both of its  
 power and its moral aims

I have the honour to be  
 dear Sir

Yours faithfully

W. E. Gladstone

J. Saunders Esq

Saunders, the well-known novelist and dramatist, who, born in 1810, lived a busy life till almost the time of his death, in 1895. Saunders brought out, in 1846, the "People's Journal," one of the earliest illustrated papers. He wrote "Love's Martyrdom," which was

played with a splendid cast at the Haymarket Theatre. But by the present generation he is best remembered as the author of "Arkwright's Wife" and "Abel Drake," two powerful plays, in which he collaborated with Tom Taylor. He wrote a great many excellent novels, one of his last being "Israel Mort, Overman," a powerful story of life in the Welsh mines :

11 Carlton House Terrace, S.W.

July 31, 1869.

Dear Sir,—I postponed thanking you for your letter of the 13th, and for the very obliging present of your work, from my desire to peruse the volumes in the first instance.

A recent indisposition found for me the opportunity sooner than I had expected, and I have read the whole with great interest and much admiration both of its power and its moral aims.

I have the honour to be,

Dear sir,

Your faithful Servant,

J. Saunders, Esq.

W. E. Gladstone.

To enter into the career of William Ewart Gladstone in an article of this nature would be impossible. Here I forget his politics, and remember only his magnetic personality, the charm of his gentler oratory, and his

many incursions into literature. I was reminded of the "Grand Old Man" in a curious way only this winter. At a popular health resort I had the rooms which he had once occupied, and my landlady told me quite a number of anecdotes connected with his stay. The ones that interested me most concerned the little family gathering round the dinner-table. One of Mr. Gladstone's sons was with his father and mother, and whenever an argument commenced, and the son expressed an opinion of his own, Mrs. Gladstone would hold up a warning finger and exclaim, "Now, don't contradict your father." The great statesman and controversialist had reached an age when contradiction is not good for the body or the mind.

Here is a letter from John Stuart Mill, which I have inserted in a copy of his work "On Liberty," published in 1859. The great philosopher and metaphysician played a very important part in the literature and politics of his country for many years. He entered Parliament, but there he was a failure. Much was expected of him, but, like many famous men who have been great in other ways, he was out of his element in the House of Commons. The most romantic episode of Mill's career was his worship of Mrs. Taylor, a worship which amounted to idolatry. After twenty years of platonic affection, Mill was enabled by the lady's widowhood to make the relationship nearer and dearer.

He married her. He went to live in Avignon, the town which was once the Papal city : and in Avignon he died, in 1873. It is from Avignon that the following letter is dated. It refers to the situation created by Mr. Gladstone contesting two seats simultaneously, Greenwich and South Lancashire :

Avignon,

Sept. 27, 1868.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge your communication of the 12th inst., requesting me to become a member of Mr. Baxter Langley's committee, with a view to his being returned for Greenwich if a vacancy should be created by Mr. Gladstone being elected for that borough but not requiring the seat.

I warmly applaud Mr. Baxter Langley's public spirited conduct in withdrawing in favour of Mr. Gladstone ; but, while the present election is pending, and I am a member of Mr. Gladstone's Committee, I prefer not to join the Committee of any other candidate.

I am, dear sir,

Yours very sincerely,

J. H. Hodges, Esq.

J. S. Mill.

After his death Mill's autobiography was published. It was a remarkable narrative, and made an immense sensation. One of the most striking passages in it was that in which he tells the story of his love for his wife. "For seven years and a half that blessing was mine,



for seven and a half only. I can say nothing which would describe in the faintest manner what that loss was and is. But because I know that she would have wished it, I endeavour to make the best of what life I

*I warmly applauded Mr  
Baxter Langley's public spirited  
conduct in withdrawing in favour of  
Mr Gladstone; but, while the present  
election is pending, and I am a  
member of Mr Gladstone's Committee,  
I prefer not to join the Committee  
of any other candidate. I am  
Dear Sir  
yours very sincerely  
J. H. Hodgkin Esq J. S. Mill*

have left, and to work for her purposes with such diminished strength as can be derived from thoughts of her and communion with her memory." This veneration for his wife was the one "religion" of Mill's life.

Mr. Baxter Langley, who retired and made way for

Mr. Gladstone at Greenwich, had an idea of a "Church of Progress," and there came into my possession some time ago a number of letters written to him on the subject by some of the most eminent thinkers of the day.

From the number I select one which is particularly interesting, as being written by Viscount Amberley, the eldest son of John Earl Russell, the famous statesman of the Gladstonian era. Viscount Amberley sat for some time for Nottingham. He was a man of very advanced opinions on religious matters, and he published a work, "An Analysis of Religious Belief," in the first volume of which I have inserted the following letter :

Rodborough Manor,  
Sept, 29, 1869.

Dear Mr. Langley,—I should have been very happy if possible to take part in your opening service, but unfortunately I have been engaged for some time to spend October 3rd at Bristol, and I must therefore beg you to accept my best wishes for your success instead of my presence.

Yours very truly,

J. B. Langley, Esq.

Amberley.

Viscount Amberley died during his father's lifetime, and is buried at Chenies. He was the father of the

Earl Russell who at various times has furnished inter-

Rodborough Manor  
Sept. 29 1869

Dear Mr Langley  
I should have been very  
happy if possible to take part in  
your opening service, but unfortunately  
I have been engaged for some time to  
spend Oct. 3rd at Bristol, & I  
must therefore beg you to accept my  
best wishes for your success instead of my  
presence. Yours very truly  
J. B. Langley, Esq. Amberley

esting matter to the newspapers, and who was not long

since the central figure in a trial for bigamy in the House of Lords.

Viscount Amberley, had he lived, would have been the father-in-law of the countess who was the wife of Mr. William Browne, or, as he preferred to be called, "Mr. Archibald Stuart," late "Prince of Modena."

### XIII

Hitherto I have only dealt with the autographs of dead celebrities, and for the good and sufficient reason that I do not feel justified in publishing the letters of authors and authoresses who are still with us. But I may be permitted, perhaps, to devote a chapter to some living authors whose letters it is my good fortune to possess. These letters I have inserted in a copy of some celebrated work of their pen. I shall not give the letters in these instances, but there can be no breach of good faith in publishing facsimiles of the signatures.

In the first edition of "Lady Audley's Secret" I have a delightful letter from my friend Miss Braddon. Here is a little personal note. Some summers back I was telling the popular authoress of my early attempts to become a writer. I told her of the poetry I sent to a halfpenny journal, and of the kindly encouragement which was given me by the editor in the "Answers to Correspondents" page: "There is pro-



mise in your work. Persevere, and you will probably succeed."

And then Miss Braddon gave me a piece of information which, under the circumstances, was quite dramatic

Believe me Sincerely yours  
Mary Maxwell

Her mother was editing the halfpenny journal at the time. It was Miss Braddon's mother who generously gave me the first lift on the road to authorship. Miss Braddon is, as every one knows, in private life Mrs. Maxwell.

Another lady writer who was famous in the days of my reading was "Ouida," whom, years after she had taken the public by storm, we knew to be Miss de la Ramé.

I have inserted Ouida's letter in that book which always appealed to me more, perhaps, than any other romance of the writer, whose style was so distinct

that it has been burlesqued again and again by our humourists—once by Bret Harte, and more than once by the genial editor of "Punch," Sir Francis Burnand.

*Running on.*

*Two days.*

*Ouida*

"Ouida" is, I believe, a childish corruption of Louisa.

I can remember a time when the reading world thrilled with anticipation when a new work of Ouida's was announced. Many of her romantic heroes gripped hold of the popular imagination, and have held on to the present day. The wonderful Guardsmen took us first, but the tenderer characters have kept a place in

hearts that have grown cold to the charm of handsome military men with a past. Ouida I saw once, and once only. That was in the English Reading Room in Florence. She is, as admirers of her works know, devoted to animals, and she has done much in Italy to ameliorate their condition. "Two Little Wooden Shoes" is my favourite Ouida, and bound up with that is the letter I possess.

It happens frequently, when I go Wimbledon way,  
*Yours truly* that I come upon our great  
*Alfred Swinburne* English poet, Algernon Charles  
Swinburne, striding along for  
his morning walk. In the first  
edition of his "Poems and Ballads"—the edition  
which Moxon published and afterwards withdrew, I  
have a letter of the poet's.

And here I may tell a little story, one which up to the present I have kept strictly to myself. My first introduction to literary work was made in the offices of the "Dark Blue" magazine. I held some sort of a post which might be called assistant sub-editor. John Christian Freund, the editor, was a friend of my family, and he gave me a chance. I used to go to the office in the Strand every day from eleven to four, and "assist" Mr. John Freund and Mr. Keningale Cook. I had through my hands a good deal of MS., which it was my duty to return to the author with the proof. In

this manner a proof of a poem written by Swinburne came my way, and in my youthful presumption I struck out one word and suggested a substitute on the margin.

It was so long ago—1871—that I almost forget what the poet wrote back. But I know it was prose. Freund came to me, recognising my handwriting, and said, "Did you write that on Swinburne's proof?" "Yes," I replied; "it was only a suggestion."

Freund laughed and explained matters to the great poet, and I have no doubt that when he knew the truth he laughed also.

A year or two later I met John Thomson, then the dramatic critic of the "Weekly Dispatch." Thomson had at one time been Swinburne's secretary. Swinburne lodged in a house kept by Thomson's mother. One night he went down into the kitchen and discovered Thomson, a youth of eighteen, reciting Milton's "Paradise Lost" to the blackbeetles. He found that the lad had a marvellous memory and a keen appreciation of poetry, and for a time made him his amanuensis. It was John Thomson who gave me his column of "Waifs and Strays" to write in the "Weekly Dispatch," and that is how I became a journalist. So perhaps I may claim, in a roundabout way, that I owe my first start in journalism to Swinburne. If he had not taken up John Thomson, John Thomson would not have gone

on to the staff of the "Dispatch"—he was recommended by Swinburne—and Thomson would not have introduced me to the "Weekly Dispatch," and later on to Henry Sampson, who put me on the staff of "Fun,"

*My dear friend*  
*E. Lynn Linton*  
*Oct 23. '88*

and carried me with him to his new venture, the "Referee."

Before I leave the "Dark Blue" I must tell another little story, and it will necessitate my giving in this selection the autograph of one who is, alas, no longer with us. I have placed in "Paston Carew" a letter from Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, and also a blue paper summons to appear and give evidence at the City of London Court on her behalf in an action against the editor of the "Dark Blue." A little dispute had arisen, and I was subpoenaed as a witness.

Mrs. Lynn Linton gave us the phrase "the girl of the period," and was always thought to be bitter against women. Those who knew her intimately told



a different tale. She was a brilliant and caustic writer. Some of her best work was not popular with the great masses, because it touched a deeper and more philosophic note than the general reader cares for. But Elizabeth Lynn Linton was one of the greatest female

*Wiser, more loving. So we reach an end  
 of this my tale, — it may be, unmethodical,  
 Moreover, not quite easy to defend.  
 As, in a measure, somewhat episodic.  
 But it has limits, — must not truth as well?  
 So here an end, for there's no more to tell.*

Austin Dobson.

writers of her day, and her work will live. I made her acquaintance and obtained her autograph through being subpoenaed as a witness against my first editor.

As this chapter of "My Autographs" runs on the personal note, I may perhaps tell another story. About a year ago I was present at a dinner given by the Whitefriars Club to Mr. Austin Dobson. In the volume which he calls "Proverbs in Porcelain" I have inserted a letter addressed to myself from Mr. Austin Dobson, and the manuscript of one of his poems, in a handwriting as neat as that of George Augustus Sala.

At the dinner, when several speakers had testified to the position which Mr. Dobson had made for himself in literature, Mr. Clement Shorter, who was in the chair, asked me if I would speak to the subject of the evening. I am a modest man in the matter of after-dinner oratory, but I could not resist the temptation to remind the guest of the evening of something which he had himself forgotten.

When I first went on to "Fun," I wrote for "Tom Hood's Annual" some poetry which I called "A Rondeau."

Mr. Austin Dobson had some of his delightful verse in the same annual. He read my rondeau, and wrote me a most charming letter, telling me exactly what a rondeau ought to be, and where my attempt failed to justify the title which I had given it.

Mr. Dobson told me that night at the Whitefriars that he had quite forgotten the circumstance. But I had kept the letter for a quarter of a century. As a memento of the occasion of its resurrection I gave it to the chairman of the evening, Mr. Clement Shorter, the brilliant editor of the "Sphere" and the "Tatler."

In "Barabbas" I have a very interesting letter from Miss Marie Corelli, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing from the early days of her fame.

I have said that I am bashful in the matter of after-

dinner oratory. Some years ago I had to make a speech at a dinner given by the foreign journalists of London. I sat between Miss Marie Corelli and Mr. Eric Mackay, and when I knew that I was to speak just before Miss Corelli I felt even more nervous than

*kindest greetings and thanks,  
from  
yours always sincerely  
Marie Corelli.*

usual. My speech was just as halting as the speech of the brilliant authoress who followed me was fluent and graceful.

Last year Miss Corelli wrote a charming story for the benefit of the "Referee" Children's Dinner Fund. I wish I could reproduce the delightful letter she sent in reply to my bold request, but that would be a breach of etiquette.

A letter from the distinguished explorer Sir Henry M. Stanley embellishes my copy of "Through the Dark Continent." It is written to Count Armfelt, who for many years was my constant travelling companion on my trips abroad. Count Armfelt was himself in his

younger days an explorer. He was in Khartoum for many months, and commanded a body of black troops in the equatorial provinces. He was at one time secretary to General Gordon, and he gave me letters of Gordon and Emin Pasha, which I hope in due

*Faithfully yours*

*Henry M. Stanley*

course to reproduce. It was concerning Egypt that Sir Henry M. Stanley wrote the letter the signature of which is all I can here permit myself to give.

Count Armfelt was at this time hoping to go to Egypt in connection with the emerald mines supposed to exist in the Soudan ; and he went, but was unable, owing to the military regulations, to pass into the region he wished to explore.

In the next chapter I shall once more deal with the letters of celebrities who are no longer with us, and resume my old plan of quoting and reproducing the letters. I propose next to deal with the autographs I possess of the Prince Regent and his brothers the Duke of Sussex and the Duke of Clarence, afterwards

William IV. The letter of George IV. was written. when he was Prince of Wales, to Mrs. Robinson, the actress. It is part of the correspondence of "Florizel and Perdita," and is written by the Prince when poor Perdita was in great pecuniary trouble.



#### XIV

This is the story of three royal brothers and the women they wooed and won: George IV. and Mrs. Robinson, the Duke of Sussex and Lady Augusta Murray, and the Duke of Clarence—afterwards William IV.—and Mrs. Jordan. The story of Florizel and Perdita has been told in history and in romance. Mary Robinson, who will always be known as "Perdita," was playing that part in "A Winter's Tale" in 1779, when George Prince of Wales, then in his eighteenth year, became enamoured of her. He sent her a letter signed "Florizel," a meeting was arranged, and the wooing went on in quite a Romeo and Juliet manner. Mrs. Robinson was obdurate. She was a married woman, and remembered it, although her husband had used her badly; and she was a reigning favourite of the footlights, and hesitated to leave them for the doubtful allegiance of a royal lover. But eventually the Prince agreed to give her a bond of £20,000, to be paid when he came of age. The romance was not of long dura-

tion. After about two years, the Prince transferred his affections to another, and sent poor "Perdita" a note saying they must meet no more. The bond was not paid, but Fox ultimately obtained the forsaken favourite a pension of £500 a year. Later Mrs. Robinson fell into poverty. When she was staying in Brighton she sent the Prince a piteous letter. The Prince wrote her in reply, and that letter, reproduced here, is in my possession, and I have inserted it in that exceedingly interesting book "Mary Robinson," by Mr. J. Fitzgerald Molloy. The letter shows that the Prince was not utterly indifferent to the troubles of the woman he had loved and cast off :

Dear Mrs. Robinson,—I have received your letter, and it really overcomes me, the scene of distress you so pathetically paint ; I will certainly wait upon you, but I am afraid it will be late before I can come to the Ship, as I have company with me. Should it be within "the compass" of my "means" to rescue you from the abyss you apprehend that "is before" you, and for you mention Mr. Brent, I need not say that the temptation of gratifying others and at the same time, and by the same means making one's self happy, is too alluring to be neglected a single moment ; however, you must allow me to be thus explicit and candid, that it must in great measure depend upon the extent of what will be necessary to be done for your service, and how far my funds may be adequate, as well as my powers equal to attain

Dear Mrs. Robinson,

I have missed you latter, but really overcomes me, the sense of distress grows pathetically faint; I will certainly wait upon you, but I am afraid, it will be late before I can come to the ship, as I have company with me. Should it be within the compass of any means to resume you, from the abyss, you apprehended that is before you, If you mention Mr. B. I need not say that the temptation of gratifying others & at the same time, & by the same means making one's self happy, is too alluring to be neglected a single moment; however, you must allow me to be thus explicit and candid, that it must in great measure depend

that object. In the meantime only rest assured of my good wishes and good intentions.

I am, dear Mrs. Robinson,

Very sincerely yours,

To Mrs. Robinson,  
Ship Inn, Brighton.

George P.

Mary Robinson, actress, authoress, and royal mistress, was of Irish descent. She was born in Bristol,

upon the extent of what will be necessary to be done for  
your service, and how far my friends, may be able  
to assist, is well as my powers equal to attain that  
object. In the mean time only rest assured  
of my good wishes, & good intentions,

I am dear Mrs Robinson,

Very sincerely Yours

George P.

To Mrs Robinson,  
Sheep Lane  
Brighton.

in 1758. Her father was the captain of a British whaler. When Miss Darby—the original name of the family was McDermott, but the great-grandfather changed it—was quite a child her father the captain sailed to America. He went to establish a whale fishery on the coast of Labrador, and to civilise the Eskimo, in order to employ them in the undertaking. While the family were suffering tortures at his long absence, it was discovered that he had sailed with a lady who had consented to reside with him for two years “in the frozen wilds of America.”

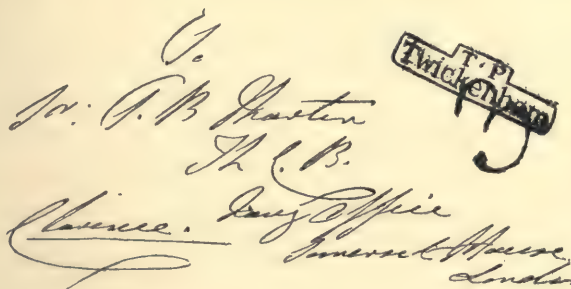
Mr. Darby's expedition was a failure. The Indians burned his settlement and murdered his followers. He lost his fortune and gave a bill of sale on his whole property. Mary and her mother were soon homeless. Later on Mrs. Darby started a girls' school at Chelsea, and Mary was a teacher in it. The school was broken up, and Mary went to Oxford House, Marylebone, to finish her education. The dancing-master there was Mr. Hussey, who was ballet-master at Covent Garden Theatre. Through him the young girl, who had developed great talent as a reciter, was introduced to David Garrick, who gave the young aspirant, of whose abilities he thought highly, a great chance. She was to appear as Cordelia.

In the meantime she had adventures. She met and married, being then about sixteen, Mr. Robinson, a young gentleman apprenticed to the law, who gave out to her mother that he was heir to a great property. But Robinson, whatever his fortune was, ran through it quickly. He was later on arrested for debt, and his young wife spent some time with him in a debtors' prison. On December 10, 1776, she made her appearance as Juliet at Drury Lane Theatre. Then came a long series of triumphs as an actress, which culminated in the fascination of the Prince of Wales.

Poor "Perdita" was sorely tempted when the royal wooer came. Her husband was living in profligacy on



her salary. After her desertion she feared to go back to the stage. She went to France, and Marie Antoinette called her "La Belle Anglaise." Later on, broken in health and fortune, she went to Brighton by the order of her doctor. It was while she was staying there that



*J.*  
*Dr. A. B. Shastin*  
*J. C. B.*  
*Clarence. Drury Lane*  
*General Manager*  
*Drury Lane*  
 T. P. Twickenham

she sent the Prince the appeal to which the letter I have reproduced was the reply. Mrs. Fitzherbert was then in the height of her splendour.

"Perdita," after being crippled many years by rheumatism, died in December 1800, and was, by her own request, buried in Old Windsor churchyard.

The Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV., the second of the royal brothers whose autographs I give, was the lover of Mrs. Jordan, another Drury Lane actress. Dorothea Jordan was born in Waterford, in 1762. Her mother was the daughter of a clergyman, and was at one time an actress at Smock Alley Theatre,

Dublin. Then she married a man who described himself as of the theatrical profession ; but he was in reality a scene-shifter. Dorothea Jordan—her real name was Bland—soon took to the stage. She played many parts, and her manager persecuted her. To escape from him she and her family left Dublin and arrived, in the greatest poverty, in Leeds. There she played for eighteen shillings a week. After many adventures she came to London and “starred” at Drury Lane. It was there that the Duke of Clarence fell in love with her and gave her an establishment. She bore him many children, all of whom took the name of Fitzclarence.


Mrs. Jordan died in the summer of 1816, in a gloomy old house near the palace of St. Cloud. She had lain on the sofa nearly all day, waiting for letters from England. After the arrival of the mail they told her that there was nothing for her. She fell back with a deep sob and died.

The Duke of Clarence had a peculiar habit of making speeches on every possible occasion. When he became William IV. this habit was the cause of frequent consternation at Court, for he invariably managed to say something exceedingly unpleasant in the course of his “ramble.” On one occasion, at a dinner given to celebrate his birthday, he replied to the toast of his health by violently abusing the Duchess of Kent, who sat next to him. The banquet broke up in confusion ; the

Duchess ordered her carriage ; the Princess Victoria, our future Queen, wept hysterically.

The third brother, whose autograph is here given on what was known as a "frank" in the days when official signatures passed letters through the post with-

*London May 2nd 1829*  
*L*  
*Bro*  
*Brotherly Love*  
*John*



out payment, had also his "romance." While living abroad for his health he married, in Rome, Lady Augusta Murray, second daughter of the Earl of Dunmore ; and, to tie the knot doubly, went through the ceremony of marriage with her again later on at St. George's, Hanover Square. George IV. made use of the Royal Marriage Act to declare the union null and void.

For some years the Duke ignored the royal decree, but finally left his wife and tried to get the children of the union from her. He afterwards married Lady

Buggin, a widow, and she was created Duchess of Inverness.

Each of the three royal brothers had his romance. The moral of all three, so far as the fair sex is concerned, is, "Put not your trust in Princes."

## XV

Walter Savage Landor was born in 1775, and lived a full and varied life, keeping himself much in evidence until his death in 1864. He was a remarkable man, and it has been said of him that for nearly ninety years he was a typical English public schoolboy, full of humour, obstinacy, Latin verse, generous impulses, chivalrous sentiment, and powers of enjoyment.

The Latin verse was certainly much in evidence throughout his career. At Rugby, when the headmaster offended him, he revenged himself by Latin verse of an insolent character. When he quarrelled with his wife in England, he left his home at 4 a.m. and started for the Continent, where he eased his mind with Latin verse. When he lost a lawsuit he wrote scathing Latin verse about his adversary. Forster, the friend of Dickens, became the friend of Landor, and helped him to publish an edition of his collected works; but Forster put his foot down on the Latin verse. He would have none of it. When, in the 'fifties, Landor



had mental trouble, and wrote a libel which led to his being cast in damages to the tune of £1000, he went out of the country and wrote some more Latin verse. He also wrote some English prose about the case,

*Perhaps you may have  
seen the Times of the  
sixteenth <sup>or fifteenth</sup> - It contains  
a letter of mine,  
showing the difference  
between epopoeia  
and tyrannicide.  
Nothing can excuse  
the late attempt made  
by Orsini. I would  
not hazard the life of  
one woman or one  
child for any change  
of dynasty. Orsini  
was a brave and virtuous*

which he sent to Forster to get published. Forster declined, and Landor quarrelled with him; but made it up before his death, and resumed a friendly correspondence.

Swinburne was a great admirer of Landor, and dedicated to him his "Atalanta in Calydon"; and there were reasons why the young poet who sang freedom and

Hugo, and Italy and Mazzini, should admire Walter Savage Landor.

Landor as a boy, as a youth, as a man, was ever in revolt against tyranny, or what he considered to be

*man - but that one  
action checks my  
rity for his fate.  
Believe me,  
dear Madam  
Yours most respectfully  
Walter Savage Landor*

tyranny. I shall dwell a little on this side of his character, because it is interesting in connection with the autograph letter which I have inserted in his "Last Fruit Off an Old Tree," and which is reproduced here in facsimile.

At school he was generally in a state of rebellion. At college he thought that a certain person was a tyrant, and he fired bullets through his windows into an empty room. Quite early in his career he was called "The Mad Jacobite," and when he was nominated for a commission in a Militia regiment the officers objected on the plea that his "advanced" opinions would make

him an unpleasant comrade. Later on he actually fought for the Spaniards against the French, and found money for "the cause." Bearing these facts in mind, the following letter becomes distinctly interesting :

Bath, March 18.

Dear Madam,—I have waited two days since I received the honour of your letter, that I might acknowledge the receipt of the parcel which it announced to me as dispatched by the Midland Railway. It has not yet arrived. This often has happened to me in the office here. I would make personal inquiries were I not detained in my room by a painful sciatica, my tormentor for nine entire weeks. Perhaps you may have seen the "Times" of the sixteenth or fifteenth. It contains a letter of mine, showing the difference between assassination and tyrannicide. Nothing can excuse the late attempt made by Orsini. I would not hazard the life of one woman or one child for any change of dynasty. Orsini was a brave and virtuous man—but this one action checks my pity for his fate.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Yours most respectfully,

Walter Savage Landor.

This letter was written in 1858, immediately after Orsini had attempted to blow up the Emperor Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie as they were

driving to the Opera. The outrage took place on the night of January 14. Orsini flung three bombs at the Emperor's carriage. They exploded with terrible and murderous effect, but leaving the Emperor and Empress practically uninjured, though they were splashed with blood. The bombs, which had been manufactured in England, hurled bullets in every direction. There were three terrible explosions. The Emperor's cocked hat was perforated ; the Empress's cheek was grazed ; sixty-six bullet marks were afterwards counted on the carriage. Only the fact that it was lined with iron plates saved the lives of the occupants. The streets were splashed with blood in every direction ; over a hundred people were seriously wounded ; and some were killed outright. Orsini, who had left London for Paris under the name of Alsopp, was arrested with three accomplices—Pieri, Rudio, and Gomez. All were sentenced to death, but only Orsini was executed.

Felix Orsini had given his whole life to revolution, or, as he maintained, "to Italy." When he was twenty-five he was sent to the galleys at Civita Vecchia for life. But Pope Gregory XVI. died and Pius IX. succeeded. Pius pardoned Orsini, who at once became the agent for the Italian Revolutionary party, which worked from London, where Mazzini—a very different stamp of man from Orsini—was their chief. Orsini got into trouble

again, and was arrested, and expelled the country, and came to London.

In 1855 he was arrested in Italy again, and condemned to death. He was confined in a fortress from which no prisoner had ever escaped. But Orsini made the record, and getting clear away once more turned his steps to hospitable London. There he wrote a book, "My Prisons in Austria and Italy," and delivered lectures on his experiences. It was in London he conceived the plan of assassinating Louis Napoleon, whom he looked upon as the author of Italy's wrongs. Walter Savage Landor, who had himself championed Italy's cause, thought Orsini a brave man; but the letter here given shows that he had no sympathy with massacre in the sacred name of Liberty.

If you were to look about for a writer who offered the greatest contrast to Walter Savage Landor, you would not have to continue your search one moment after your mind's eye had alighted on the name of Martin Tupper. The author of "Proverbial Philosophy" was the butt of the critics, the target of the comic journalists, the joke of society for close upon fifty years.

Yet he was a man with strong common-sense ideas, and the work of his which nobody took the trouble to read had much in it that showed he was really a philosopher as well as a philanthropist and a reformer.



The letter which I have inserted in his "Proverbial Philosophy" mentions that immortal work, and is doubly interesting because it explains that the letter intended for the poet Tupper was delivered by mistake to the poet Tennyson :

Underhill, Cintra Park, Upper Norwood,  
September 18, 1880.

Dear Sir,—Your request—accorded within—reaches me circuitously ; hence the delay : for you sent it to Haslemere (Tennyson's place) ; whence it went to Albery—my place ; but I am at present "here." However, all's right now.

The "Sibylline" sent is very scarce ; but if you want more, you can write and ask for a few, reprinted by M. H. Sutton, Esq., Whitley, Reading—who has my leave to reproduce this Protest for good-doing's sake—and he probably will give copies.

My "Pro. Phil." has long been in 4 series (Ward & Lock), 1 vol., and is very soon to be issued by Cassell in an illustrated form.

Where does Dr. Abbot live ? His book is a deep and full one.—Truly yours,

Martin F. Tupper.

Mr. Edgar Wilkinson.

Martin Tupper was the son of a famous physician, and was born in 1810, at 20 Devonshire Place, Marylebone Road. His "Proverbial Philosophy," because it was almost universally ridiculed, utterly obscured the

many efforts he made with his pen to champion reforms which have since been successfully accomplished. He was an earnest advocate for a more friendly understanding between England and America, and he wrote

*The Sibylline sent is very scarce: but if you want more, you can write & ask for a few, reprinted by M. H. Sutton Esq. Whitley, Reading, - who has my leave to reproduce this Protest for good-doing's sake, - & he probably will give copies.*

*My Pro: Phil: has long been in 4 series (Ward's)*  
*1 vol: & is very won to be issued by Caprell in an*  
*illustrated form. / When does Dr. Abbott live? - His book*  
*is a deep & full one. Truly Yours*  
*Mr. Edgar Wilkins. Martin F. Tupper.*

eloquently and patriotically in favour of the Volunteer movement. His name has been adopted as a synonym for commonplace; but even in the days when he was as much a public jest as the poet Close he had a select body of admirers. I can remember, in the days of my youth, a devoted band in the faithful city of Worcester—where, though I was not born, I was christened—who

looked upon Tupper as the poet of the age, and knew his philosophy by heart. I almost knew it by heart in my young days, for the reason that my boyhood was largely passed at Worcester among the Tupperites. I am afraid I have forgotten it now. Martin Tupper was

With Mr Tennyson's best  
thanks for the interesting  
letter  
July 9 / 80

a vain, genial, earnest man, who never resented the ridicule that was showered upon him, but took himself seriously to the last. In 1873, serious financial reverses having fallen upon him, he was granted a Civil List pension. He died in 1889. As Tupper mentions above the fact of his letter going to Tennyson, I may perhaps here find a place for the autograph letter which I have inserted in "Queen Mary." The letter is in Tennyson's writing, but in the third person. It will be noticed that it is written in the same year as Martin Tupper's :

With Mr. Tennyson's best thanks for the interesting letter. July 9/80.

The philosophy of Tennyson has "become" proverbial. Many of his ringing lines are now familiar in our mouths as household words. He sang sweetly for an age that loved tenderness and gentleness and pretty conceits. Most of his poems are gems. The poets of our day do not affect gems. Jewellery is no longer fashionable for men.

## XVI

As I search through my collection of autographs, and come upon those of celebrated—or perhaps one ought to say notorious—criminals, I feel that it would not be right to omit them entirely from this volume.

I will not dwell upon the crime more than is necessary to recall it to the mind of the reader ; but the handwriting will, I think, prove interesting to the students of caligraphy.

I have a large number of letters in my possession written from the most terrible address that ever fell to the lot of human being—the condemned cell. I have the handwriting of one or two famous criminals—little notes they have written with lead-pencil while being tried for their lives. These, of course, are unsigned, but they came into my possession under circumstances which leave no doubt of their authenticity.

It is from these letters and notes—in every case written by criminals who have paid the last penalty of the law—that I shall make my selection. All are of to-



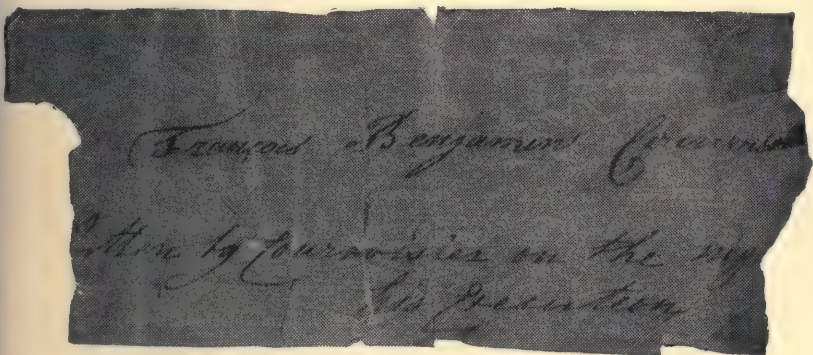
day, with the exception of the signature with which I commence the series.

Lord William Russell, who lived at 14 Norfolk Street, Park Lane, was found murdered in his bed on the morning of Wednesday, May 6, 1840. His throat had been cut. His Swiss valet, François Benjamin Courvoisier, was a few days later arrested and charged with the crime. The damning evidence against Courvoisier was that of Madame Piolaine, who kept the Hôtel de Dieppe, in Leicester Square. Courvoisier had formerly been a waiter at this hotel. After the murder Courvoisier called and handed a packet to his old mistress, and asked her to take care of it. Madame Piolaine read in a French newspaper an account of the murder. In that account it was mentioned that the Swiss valet Courvoisier last saw his master alive. Madame Piolaine at once began to connect Courvoisier and his packet with the crime. In the presence of her solicitor she opened it. It contained a quantity of silver with the Bedford crest—Lord William Russell's—upon it.

Courvoisier was found guilty and sentenced to death. In Newgate he wrote several confessions. He was like many convicted murderers, exceedingly fond of writing about himself and his emotions. The love of pen and ink remained with him to the end. On the morning of his execution he was writing for two hours, having been

specially called at four o'clock that he might have time for his correspondence.

He wrote to all his relatives and to some of his friends. To one—a young woman—he sent a lock of his hair in a little packet, and signed his name. I have



the packet and the lock of hair, and the signature is here reproduced in facsimile.

Calcraft was the executioner. Courvoisier was only twenty-three at the time of his execution.

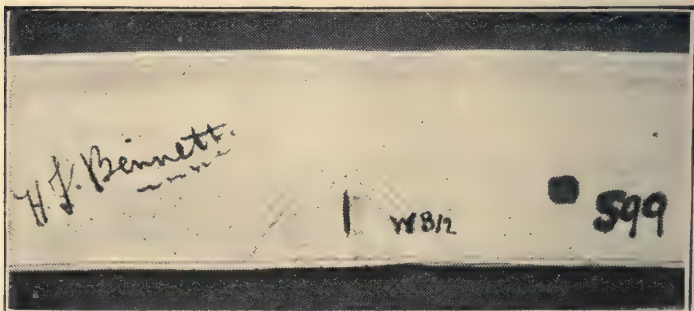
The murder of his wife by Herbert John Bennett on the beach at Yarmouth is in every reader's recollection, and the details need not be given.

He was even younger than Courvoisier, but a much more cool and collected criminal. I watched him narrowly through his trial, and he never faltered until

the last day. At the end he tripped lightly up the steps to hear the verdict of the jury, and after sentence of death walked quietly away without any support from the warders.

The crime was brought home to Bennett, long after its commission, by a washing mark. On some of the murdered woman's clothing the washing mark "599" was found. This was advertised widely by the Press, and eventually a laundress came forward and stated that was the washing mark she had put upon the linen of a family of the name of Bennett. She gave the address, police inquiries were made, and the guilty man was arrested on the eve of his marriage with another woman, whom he had been courting at the time he committed the crime !

A collar of Bennett's is in my possession. On it are the washing mark and his name written in marking ink. The mark and written name are here reproduced :



Bennett's fortitude broke down in the condemned cell, and shortly before the day of execution he gave way to paroxysms of rage. The murder was a particularly brutal one, and was calculated and executed with considerable cunning. A peculiar feature of this case is that while he was paying his addresses to the girl he was going to marry the subject of the mysterious murder on Yarmouth beach was frequently discussed by the girl and her brothers in his presence.

After committing the murder on Saturday night, Bennett went to a Yarmouth hotel, procured a bed, slept soundly, and in the morning made a hearty breakfast of tea, bread and butter, and eggs and bacon. He then took the train for London to Liverpool Street, and met his sweetheart in the afternoon at the Marble Arch.

Mrs. Dyer was a wholesale murderer of babies. She kept a baby farm, and was in the habit of disposing of her charges by dropping them into the river. She was arrested at Reading, where she was carrying on her business. The details are fresh in the public mind, and need not be here elaborated.

This grey-haired murderess of helpless children was quite a sentimental old lady where her "business" was not concerned. She loved poetry, and she loved romance. A pathetic story appealed to her at once. I

have a number of letters written by Mrs. Dyer before and after her conviction. Here is a piece of poetry which she wrote after she had been cast for execution :

*My nature. Lord, I know with grief  
I am a poor fallen, Leap.  
Shrivelled, and dry, near unto death  
Driven by sin, as with a breath  
But if Thy grace I am made new.  
Washed in the Blood of Jesus too:  
Like to a Lily I shall stand  
Spotless and pure, at his right hand*  
Mother

The old lady was always writing out hymns and little pieces of poetry from memory more or less correctly.

When in prison she wrote to a relative to send her some books to read. One of the books she particularly asked for was "East Lynne." A few days after reading it she wrote to thank the sender, and said that it was a beautiful book, and that she had cried her eyes out over the death of little Willie.

Here is a letter of good advice written to a relative. It must always be remembered, however, that letters written from prison are "read" by the governor, and have to be initialled by him before they leave the goal.



The fact that their letters are going to be read by the

Oh when the letters came no  
 Stamp on. I had not then got  
 my money now I have and  
 have a plenty of stamps  
 don't send me any more  
 have you heard from Mrs  
 Palmer what does she say  
 of course you will go home  
 with her you will soon hear  
 from Willie I have wrote to  
 him and you must not keep  
 any thing from

your Brother tel him the truth  
 never attempt to decieve him  
 god help and bless you both  
 ask the Lord for strength and  
 guidance my dear child I  
 have writtlen a letter for my  
 dear Annie keep it til Willie  
 come home and do as he  
 advise you, once more God  
 Bless you I hope I shall se  
 you soon send me all the  
 news with love your loving  
 Mother A Dyer x x x x

gaol authorities accounts for many of the pious senti-

ments which are generally found in the prison correspondence of criminals :

When the letters came no stamp on, I had not then got my money. Now I have and have a plenty of stamps dont send me any more have you heard from Mrs Palmer what does she say of course you will go home with her you will soon hear from Willie I have wrote to him and you must not keep any thing from your Brother tel him the truth never atempt to deceive him God help and bless you booth ask the Lord for strength and guidance my dear child I have written a letter for my dear Annie keep it til Willie come home and do as he advise you, once more God Bless you I hope I shal se you soon send me all the news. With love your loving mother

A. Dyer.

XXXX

XXXX

Mrs. Dyer was duly executed. After her death a sale of her effects took place. The highest priece was realised by a baby's chair.

## XVII

The strange story of Edgar Edwards is too recent to need much recapitulation. On December 1, 1902, a young man, William John Darby, keeping a small shop in Wyndham Road, Camberwell, together with his wife and child, was barbarously murdered. The bodies were cut up, put in a sack, and removed on a cart to a house at Leyton. In this house Edgar Edwards attempted to murder a man named Garland, whom he had lured to the place under the pretence of buying his business. The neighbours, alarmed by cries for help, ran to the house, the police came, and Edgar Edwards was given into custody, and his victim taken to the hospital. It was then that a search of the house resulted in the finding of some cards having Darby's name and address. When the police went to the address, it was discovered that the Darby family had disappeared. Eventually the garden at Leyton was dug up, the bodies were discovered, and Edwards was charged with the murder.

I was present at the Old Bailey when this extraordinary criminal was put upon his trial. He refused to plead. When asked if he was guilty or not guilty, he replied in a gruff voice, "I don't think you ought to ask me such a question."

There was never any doubt of his guilt, and there

*I wish you to clearly understand that the matter is entirely in your hands, use your own discretion; I should very much like to see you but I certainly should not like you to come if it will upset ~~you~~ or distress you in any way. whatever*

*The chief reason for my wishing to see you is to make final arrangements about Charlie. Both you and Charlie have the first and only claim upon me and to further this end I think it*

was practically no defence. When the verdict was returned and the usual question was put to the prisoner, he exclaimed insolently, "Oh, hurry up; get it over!"

After sentence was passed, and the chaplain's "Amen" echoed through the silent court, Edwards uttered a melodramatic "Ha! ha!"

His crime was a brutal one—a deliberate butchering of three people for the sake of a few pounds. The man's conduct at his trial was outrageous. He was an

habitual criminal with a criminal history ; and yet after the prison doors had closed upon him he became, according to the accounts that appeared in the newspapers, a most devout Christian and a sentimental letter-writer. He was a Methodist, and the Methodist ministers who attended him published, after his execution, quite a glowing account of his religious fervour.

Some of the sentimental letters that he wrote are in

*Dear Harry, - Just received your letter and am surprised to hear the account you give about the various statements made against poor dear Father, of course they are untrue, and were not given by my sanction*

my possession, and it is from them I take the extracts which are here given in facsimile.

Edwards had at one time of his career lived with a woman, by whom he had a son. It is to her that the first letter, of which a portion is reproduced, is addressed.

I omit the name, as there is no need to give further painful publicity to one who suffered terribly at the time of the investigation, and behaved admirably under most trying circumstances.



The letter is written on a double sheet of the regulation blue paper. The front page is as follows :

*Jr* *W* *L. & V. O.*

In replying to this letter, please write on the envelope :—

NUMBER 12882 NAME Edg. Edwards

**H. M. PRISON, WANDSWORTH**

*The following regulations as to communications, by Visit or Letter, between prisoners and their friends, are notified for the information of their correspondents.*

*The permission to write and receive Letters is given to prisoners for the purpose of enabling them to keep up a connection with their respectable friends and not that they may be kept informed of public events.*

*All Letters are read by the Prison Authorities. They must be legibly written and not crossed. Any which are of an objectionable tendency, either to or from prisoners, or containing slang, or improper expressions, will be suppressed.*

*Prisoners are permitted to receive and to write a letter at intervals, which depend on the rules of the stage they attain by industry and good conduct; but matters of special importance to a prisoner may be communicated at any time by Letter (prepaid) to the Governor, who will inform the prisoner thereof, if expedient.*

*In case of misconduct, the privilege of receiving and writing a Letter may be forfeited for a time.*

*Money, Books, Postage Stamps, Food, Tobacco, Clothes,*

*&c., should not be sent to Prisoners, for their use in prison, as nothing is allowed to be received at the Prison for that purpose.*

*Persons attempting to clandestinely communicate with, or to introduce any article to or for prisoners, are liable to fine and imprisonment, and any prisoner concerned in such practices is liable to be severely punished.*

*Prisoners' friends are sometimes applied to by unauthorised persons, to send Money, &c., to them privately, under pretence that they can apply it for the benefit of the prisoners, and under such fraudulent pretence, such persons endeavour to obtain money for themselves. Any Letter containing such application, received by the friends of a prisoner, should be at once forwarded by them to the Governor.*

*Prisoners are allowed to receive Visits from their friends, according to rules, at intervals which depend on their stage.*

*When Visits are due to prisoners notification will be sent to the friends whom they desire to visit them.*

The letter itself is written on the inner pages and the one outside page. It is a long letter, and I make only one extract. It is dated February 24, some little time after his condemnation.

I wish you to clearly understand that the matter is entirely in your hands, use your discretion ; I should very much like to see you but I certainly should not like you to come if it will upset or distress you in any way whatever.

The chief reason for my wishing to see you is to make final arrangements about Charlie. Both you and Charlie have the first and only claim upon me and to further this end I think it wise to discuss the matter with you.

The letter is throughout a remarkably well-worded one, and will be a surprise to those who saw the man in court, and who remember that he pawned an umbrella for eighteenpence on the morning of the day that by a swindling pretence he got into the Darbys' shop, remained there as the intending purchaser, and brutally butchered the whole family in cold blood, afterwards cutting them up and burying them in a garden of a house at Leyton, which he had on that day in some way acquired possession of.

With the three bodies lying in the garden, he attempted to murder Mr. Garland, who would probably have been also interred in the garden cemetery. Fortunately, Garland was a strong man, and saved his life by fighting for it and shouting for help. Edwards meant to kill Mr. Garland with the sash-weight he had found so effective with the unfortunate Darbys.

One finds some difficulty in understanding how such a brute could have had delicate and refined sentiments in his family affairs. But he had. His one frequently expressed wish was that his fate should be kept a secret from his mother.

In another letter which I have he shows almost equal respect for the memory of his father :

Dear Harry,—Just received your letter and am surprised to hear the account you give about the various statements made against poor dear Father, of course they are untrue, and were not given by my sanction.

It was stated at the trial that the father of "Edgar Edwards" died a dipsomaniac. In this letter, written a few days before his execution, the son is indignant that the memory of his father should have been maligned.

Edgar Edwards was executed on Tuesday, March 3. His last words as the Wesleyan minister, who had accompanied him to the scaffold, stepped aside were, "God bless you all." Whatever else the unhappy man was, he was certainly a psychological study.

Here is a letter written by a condemned murderer two days before his execution. William Chambers, an electrical engineer, and at one time a ground man at Lord's, was executed on December 4, 1902. He had gone from London to Eversholt, where his wife was living with her mother, and murdered them both. In the letter which lies before me he puts the crime down to influenza :

Dec. 2, 1902.

I was so glad to have a few lines from you and that some one thinks about me. I am placed in this awfull



position through mother-in-law and to sisters. They

never been the same man  
Since hoping your wife Dec 2/1802  
& Child are well

I never thought I should come to this  
myself at my mind

I was glad to have a few lines  
from you & that some one thinks  
about me I am placed in the  
an awful position through  
Mather in June 2nd and to sisters  
they fetched my poor wife from  
her home when I was out & caused  
me to go wrong in my head. but  
I never was a drunkard

You no that & your Brathers  
Give my kind regards to your  
Brathers I hope they are well  
& kind regards to all old friends  
I am so sorry & grieved for  
my poor dear wife & also her mother  
& drunkards do not have homes  
like mine but God bless her  
I hope I shall meet her in Heaven  
with all good wishes from  
yours in Great sorrow

William Chambers

thanks for your letter & from from  
your Brathers kind message  
no more broken George  
by. I am making my  
peace with God

fetches my poor wife from her home when I was out



and caused me to go wrong in my head, but I never was a drunkard—you no that and your brothers. Give my kind regards to your brothers and hope they are well and kind regards to all old friends. I am so sorry and greaved for my poor dear wife, and also her mother. You have seen my wife and my home and drunkards do not have homes like mine, but God bless her, and I hope I shall meet her in heaven.—With all good wishes from yours in great sorrow,

William Chambers.

Thanks for your letters and for your brother's kind message. No more cricket, George. Good-bye, I am making my peace with God.

In a postscript written at the side of the letter he adds :

I never though I should come to this. Influenza upset my mind, never been the same man since. Hoping your wife and child are well.

The line in the letter that perhaps strikes one most is, "No more cricket." It was the ruling passion strong in death.

## XVIII

Among some of the most interesting autographs I possess are those of the dramatists I have either collaborated with or had the privilege of knowing. My earliest dramatic friends were Henry Pettitt and Paul Meritt. Henry Pettitt, when I first knew him, was a writing-master at the North London Collegiate School. I saw him for the first time as he made his bow in front of the curtain at the Grecian Theatre on the first night of "British Born." He had collaborated in a play with Paul Meritt, who was at that time engaged at the Grecian in the front of the house. Paul Meritt had previously been in the carpet business, in the service of Thomas Tapling and Co., of Gresham Street.

Both Meritt and Pettitt came eventually to the Adelphi and Drury Lane with their melodramas, and Pettitt was for many years my valued collaborator. It seems a good many years ago that I sat with Pettitt and Meritt under a big tree in Richmond Park, and we talked about the future and the wonderful things that

we meant to do. Both Meritt and Pettitt were then at the Grecian, and I was working from nine to five in the

Park Theatre  
New York  
Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Sam -  
Just a line  
"across the water" to congratulate  
you upon the success of "Lips  
& London" Two years ago I  
prophesied your success as a  
melodramatist, & consequently  
no one is more 'thoroughly pleased'  
than - Yours Most Sincerely  
Harry Pettitt

City, and going to Fleet Street in my luncheon hour to get work on "Fun" and the "Weekly Dispatch."

It was in "The World" that Augustus Harris came into the combination and started the revived fortunes of Drury Lane.

Some time previously I had had a belated stroll with Harris after the Royalty Theatre was closed. At that theatre I had my first comedy, "Crutch and Tooth-pick," playing, and Harris had a short burlesque, "Venus," which he had written in conjunction with Edward Rose, following it.

There was no idea then of Harris going to the Lane, or of my going to the Princess's ; but as we strolled along in the moonlight on our way to a Bohemian club Harris told me the plot of a drama, and said, "I shall do that some day," and then I told him the plot of a drama I had in my head, and said that some day perhaps I should do that. Both plays came out in due course. One was "The World" at Drury Lane, and the other was "The Lights o' London" at the Princess's.

Paul Meritt, who was of Polish origin—his real name was Metzger—was a man of heavy build. He was a bright, amusing companion, but had one or two peculiarities. One of them was an intense desire to eat anything at once that took his fancy. I remember him one afternoon, in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, taking a great fancy to some pease-pudding. He went into the shop, bought some, and ate it from the paper—to his own huge delight and the great embarrassment of Henry Pettitt and Augustus Harris, who were walking with him.

Paul Meritt died a few years ago, at the age of fifty-two. He had somewhat dropped out of the swim for

*Tuesday Morning.*

THE DOLLIES,  
PEMBROKE SQUARE,  
KENSINGTON, W.

*Dear George.*

*Blame none.*

*Congested liver.*

*Feeling better.*

*Thank God!*

*Many thanks*

*Very pleased*

*In future.*

*Short letters*

*Long friends!*

*Write soon.*

*Every Yours*

*Paul Meritt.*

the last year or two of his life. Henry Pettitt, on the contrary, died in harness, and left a fortune of nearly



fifty thousand pounds. His funeral procession passed through miles of London adorned with picture posters of his then running successes—"A Woman's Revenge"

*I know nothing of the  
people. If you think  
it desirable, well and  
good. With all good  
wishes. Yours sincerely,  
H. J. Byron*

at the Adelphi, and "A Life of Pleasure" at Drury Lane. Many of his plays, and several in which I was connected with him, are still running in the provinces.

There was a time in the memory of many of the critics who are still in the stalls on the first night when the name of Henry J. Byron was one to conjure with in the theatrical world. Byron was the wit of his day. His burlesques made the fortune of the Strand, his comedies made the fortune of the Vaudeville, where the run of "Our Boys" was phenomenal; and he himself appeared with great success in several of his own plays in the part of an amiable "swell." Perhaps his greatest success as an actor was as Sir Simon Simple in "Not Such a Fool as he Looks." Byron was

an inveterate punster as well as a wit. The audience always sat open mouthed at his first nights waiting to roar at his jokes. He told me once that many of the "lines" which were greeted with shouts were surprises to him. He had not seen them in such a very humorous light himself at the time he wrote them.

Henry J. Byron was a general favourite. Pressmen and "pros" loved him, and the good things he said in company were talked about and written about constantly. He made an estimable old lady connected with the management of a West-End theatre his Mrs. Malaprop, and earned her undying fame by the odd sayings he attributed to her. Byron's peculiarity was taking a house, living in it for a time, then taking another and keeping the old one on his hands unlet. When he died he had about four houses for which he was paying rent, and he had not entered three of them for two years. There was hardly a West-End theatre of his day that had not produced a play or a burlesque of his. He wrote pantomime, burlesque, comedy, and drama; he edited a comic paper, and he was a constant contributor to the comic Press. Born in 1834, he died on April 12, 1884.

The Byron days were also the days of Burnand and Boucicault. The "Three Busy B.'s" they were called. Sir Francis Burnand is still with us, and his frank, bright humour still cheers us weekly in the pages of

"Punch." But in the Byron days he was a prolific playwright, and, like his "confrère," his wit was his strong point. A list of his productions would fill a page of this volume. Those by which he is perhaps best

*will suit equally well  
perhaps better Jrs truly  
F. C. Burnand.*

remembered by old playgoers were "Ixion," which took the town by storm at the Royalty, and "The Colonel," which was a colossal success at the little Prince of Wales's, in Tottenham Court Road, when it passed under the management of Mr. Edgar Bruce. Sir Francis (then plain Mr.) Burnand wrote Adelphi drama in his day. "Proof," which is still a favourite in the provinces, was one of his great melodramatic successes. Present-day playgoers have the happiest memories of the delightful "La Cigale" at the Lyric, which was, I think, almost the last big venture of our popular humorist in stage work.

At the time that Byron and Burnand were supplying the big demand for burlesque—a form of entertainment that has almost disappeared from the playbills—Robert

Reece was running them hard in the matter of prolific production.

Reece, who in addition to being a facile rhymester and punster was an accomplished musician, was the

*can never forget it, on the  
happy time I spent with  
you at the Mill House.*

*heartily yours*

*Robt. Reece.*

frequent collaborator of H. B. Farnie, and was responsible with him for the English version of "Les Cloches de Corneville," Planquette's delightful opera, which is still running. Reece was also responsible for many of the Gaiety burlesques in the ever-green John Hollingshead's time ; the still remembered "Ali Baba" was one of the earliest.

Reece had some property in Barbados, and it was a source of constant anxiety to him. Whenever he ought to have been elated by a success something was wrong with the Barbados plantations. I knew poor Reece, one of the gentlest and most lovable of men, intimately,

and I never met him without hearing that something had happened in Barbados. If it was not a hurricane which had destroyed his sugarcanes, it was a flood. If it was not a flood, it was a fire. If it was not a fire, it was labour trouble. Even at his funeral the subject cropped up. I met a relative of his, and asked him some sympathetic questions about my friend's last days. "He was in no pain," was the reply, "but just before the finish he was very upset by some bad news from Barbados."



## XIX

In "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," the epoch-marking play which brought Mr. Arthur Wing Pinero to the front rank of serious dramatists, and attracted the attention not only of the English-speaking world, but of the whole of the Continent, I have placed a charming little letter, which I received from the author as long ago as 1886.

I have very pleasant memories of the early Pinero, who played with Irving, drew funny pictures of himself in the "Era" Almanac, and requested, in the great theatrical organ, that all communications should be forwarded to him to a prettily named lodge at Gravesend.

I remember "Daisy's Escape," which was, I fancy, almost the young actor's first attempt at playwriting, and the comedies that came tripping along the path of popularity one after the other in merry mood. Mr. Pinero did not in those days look at life so realistically as he does now. But he had pathos then as well as

humour, and his "Sweet Lavender" was a dainty English flower that shed fragrance over a garden too crowded at that time with gaudy foreign blooms. But his plays were even then plays to read as well as to see, and the volumes that contain "The Cabinet Minister,"

3<sup>rd</sup> April 1881

My dear Mr. Swin.

Let me offer you  
my good wishes for  
the success of your  
new play.

Sincerely yours,  
Arthur W. Pinero.

"The Schoolmistress," and "The Magistrate" are still as interesting as those which contain "Iris" and "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith."

Mr. Pinero has, perhaps more than all his "confrères," the art which conceals theatrical artifice. He is a master of stagecraft as well as a master of phrases, and

it is only on very rare occasions that he attempts to argue with his critics.

It was when "The Romany Rye" was in rehearsal

GREEN ROOM CLUB,

20, BEDFORD STREET, W.C.

Dear Mrs, All good  
luck tonight is the  
heartly wish of  
Yrs always  
Henry A Jones  
Love R Lewis Esq

at the Princess's Theatre that I met Henry Arthur Jones, who was then collaborating with Henry Herman in the play which was to follow mine, "The Silver King." If I remember rightly, it was Mr. Jones who

came to our relief when we wanted some real gipsies for the encampment scene, and found them for us on a common some fifteen miles out of London. I am not sure that the "Queen" of the tribe who came to see Mr. Wilson Barrett to make the necessary arrangements for a theatrical engagement was not personally conducted by the brilliant dramatist, who has won world-wide fame since the days that he wrote a little one-act play, "A Clerical Error," which Wilson Barrett produced, and who has been recently engaged in "Whitewashing Julia" in the provinces. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's plays are also "library plays," and it is in a copy of "Saints and Sinners," a great Vaudeville success, that I have placed the letter, a facsimile of a portion of which is given here. Mr. Jones is a great believer in the rights of authors, rights which he has asserted on more than one occasion with a publicity which has been in no way disadvantageous to the business at the box-office.

Henry Herman, who was Henry Arthur Jones's first collaborator, was quite a character in the theatrical world. He called himself Darco, or D'Arco, if I remember rightly, when I knew him first as the joint author of a musical comedy or farce which had something to do with a parrot. He blossomed into fame as Henry Herman when he became business manager for Wilson Barrett. He did a version of "Adrienne

Lecouvreur" for Modjeska at the Court Theatre ; he collaborated with Henry Arthur Jones in a version of "A Doll's House" called "Breaking a Butterfly" : he collaborated with W. G. Wills in "Claudian" ; and he wrote "Fay o' Fire," the musical play in which, I fancy,

*Herman*

*Enclose letter from Mr Brooks  
Will you kindly see it & let him have the  
synopsis of "The Romanay Rye" by tonight  
post*

*Yours sincerely  
H. Herman*

Miss Marie Tempest made, at the Opera Comique, her first London appearance as a "prima donna." But fame and fortune came to him with "The Silver King," and, though he made money with "Claudian," his good luck deserted him to some extent afterwards.

Herman—"Daddy Herman," as he was constantly



called in theatrical circles—was a man of considerable culture and very wide knowledge. He was an Alsatian, and never quite lost his foreign accent. His favourite expression was "See, see." With these words he terminated almost every sentence he addressed to you in the course of an argument. Herman had a glass eye, and never disguised the fact from any one, except on one occasion from a cabman who had mercilessly thrashed his horse while driving Herman home to his residence at Hampstead.

Herman objected to the man's cruelty, but said nothing till he got out of the cab. Having first carefully removed his glass eye, he held it out between his finger and thumb, and exclaimed, "That's what you have done, you scoundrel ; see, see ! You have cut my eye out with your whip. I shall give you into custody ; see, see !"

The cabman gave one horrified glance at the eye, exclaimed "Oh, Jerusalem !" and without waiting for his fare whipped up his horse and drove off at a furious rate.

Herman, in addition to writing plays, was a novelist, and on one or two occasions he collaborated with Mr. David Christie Murray. The best novel produced by this collaboration was "One Traveller Returns." While Herman and Christie Murray were writing a book together they took a villa situated in a lonely spot

between Nice and Monte Carlo. They used to go to Nice or Monte Carlo of an evening for the theatre or the concert-room, and there came the trouble. They had to walk home along a road that had rather an evil reputation. Two or three people walking along it from Monte Carlo had been set upon and robbed, and in one

but both, if possible. I am determined "Beauty" shall be finished before the new year.

Yours sincerely,  
Sydney Grundy.

---

instance a gentleman returning from the Kursaal late at night had been murdered.

Herman did not care for that walk in the small hours because, as he said, he had only one eye to keep a look-out with. So eventually the collaborators, who had taken the villa for three months, went to an hotel at Nice, and their villa residence saw them no more.

Mr. Sydney Grundy's neat handwriting I have

inserted, not in a published play, but in a novel ; one he wrote, I believe, in his Manchester days, when he was still at the Bar, and the theatre was his amusement, and not his profession. The book is called " In the Days of His Vanity." It was when " The Member for Slocum " was running at the Royalty that I met Sydney Grundy one evening in the smoking-room attached to the theatre, and we exchanged views on many subjects in general and the stage in particular. Mr. Grundy, who has the Scribe method of construction in addition to the gift of happy dialogue, has always had a high reputation with the critics, though in his early days he fell foul of one of them, and kept up a correspondence in the " Era " which was vastly entertaining to everybody but the critic concerned.

Mr. Grundy has given us some delightful plays. The best examples of his talent are, perhaps, " Sowing the Wind " and " A Pair of Spectacles," an adaptation of a French comedy so skilfully done that the atmosphere is entirely English. In his early days Sydney Grundy had many grievances—one of them lasted a considerable time, and the Censor was the offender. The Reader of Plays refused to license an adaptation which Grundy, with a collaborator, had made of a French play. The Censor heard a good deal about that refusal for many months to come. Eventually the play found its way to the stage. It was called

"The Novel Reader," and Miss Lottie Venne played the heroine.

Mr. Grundy is as great a favourite with the Americans as he is with us, and we are all anxiously waiting for him "to oblige again." "The Degenerates" was perhaps his last great success, although "Frocks and Frills" made considerable stir owing to the magnificent opportunities provided by the dramatist for the dressmakers.

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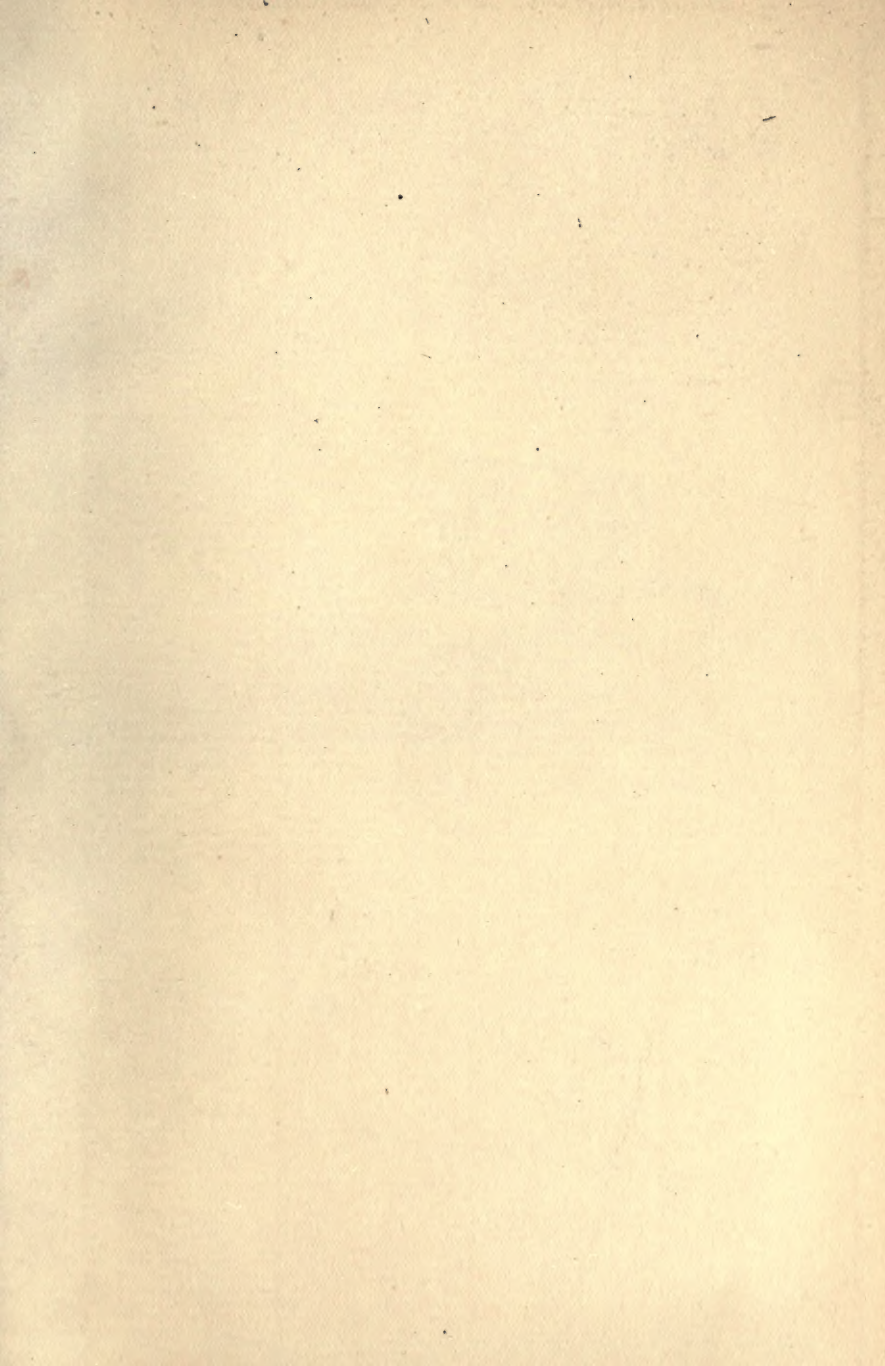
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